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*How to Succeed with People*

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# THE DYNAMICS OF HUMAN RELATIONS

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HOW TO SUCCEED WITH PEOPLE

HOW TO PUT YOUR IDEAS ACROSS

HOW TO GET LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

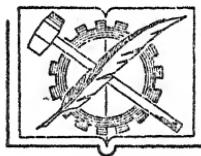
THE DYNAMICS OF HUMAN RELATIONS

*How to Succeed with People*

BY

RICHARD W. WETHERILL

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## Preface

THIS book is first in a series. The series—*The Dynamics of Human Relations*—is designed to explore the field of human relations from the point of view of the person who wants to make the most of his dealings with people. It presents specific techniques to meet almost every human-relations problem that confronts the average person. Each book presents illustrations and examples drawn from a wide variety of situations. It presents principles that decide what action will produce a given result under a given circumstance. It presents procedures for getting the result that is desired. It implements that sort of information with a specific methodology that will help you reduce each technique to habitual and instinctive performance.

These books climax twenty-five years of close observation and experimentation among people of all sorts. They present tested methods that work. Every procedure has been checked against high standards of right conduct, in accordance with a pattern of combined "moral and expedient right" that will become increasingly clear as your reading progresses. There are no trick short cuts, although there are many devices that will save you time in reaching your goal of getting along well with virtually every person you meet. There are also devices that will correct or eliminate your personality problems if you will use those devices well.

In these books I have attempted to bring together and advocate the principles and procedures that will be used by every honest and accomplished diplomat. These are the principles that people violate and the procedures that they ignore when they get into trouble. They are also the prin-

ciples that people live by and the procedures that they use when their human dealings lead to success. The person who learns and uses these principles and procedures will solve his problems of getting along with people. He will arouse their friendliness. He will get them to do what he wants them to do. He will gain for himself a seat at the council tables of life. Leadership will come to him as a natural heritage, seemingly without direct effort.

Skill in handling human relationships will be an important success factor as long as any great proportion of people have trouble doing it. That most people do have trouble is a fact so evident, I am afraid, that it does not need to be stated.

It is important to read these books in the sequence of their presentation if you can. Volume 1, *How to Succeed with People*, discusses three major topics: I. Learn to Understand People. II. Make Everybody Like You. III. Develop Your Conversational Skill. Each of those topics will be important in every human relationship. Volume 2, *How to Put Your Ideas Across*, discusses two major topics: I. Express Yourself Well Before Groups. II. Develop Your Powers of Persuasion. The more you know about the subjects treated in Volume 1, the more you will get out of Volume 2, and perhaps more important, the more effectively you will be able to apply its techniques. The same principle applies to Volume 3, *How to Get Leadership and Influence*, which also discusses two major topics: I. Stimulate People to Right Action. II. Strengthen and Increase Your Prestige.

From the obvious correlation among the various topics treated in this series, it is clear that there is no phase of human relations that exists as a separate entity, free from dependence on other phases of human relations. The person who would master any portion must, in effect, master the whole.

It was originally planned to cover all the foregoing topics in one volume. To do this, I expected to dispense with virtually all the illustrations and examples. However, my publishers advised me that the most effective way to present the subject would necessitate use of illustrations and examples, and detailed methodology, as well as the description of actual techniques. It would avoid the eliminations that would be necessary if I attempted to cram the material into one book. I am not sorry I took their advice. The three volumes have afforded me ample space to develop the material. I think they permitted a better result.

A certain disadvantage is involved in the use of illustrations and examples. They have the apparent effect of limiting the application of a technique to the specific situation described in the example. When you face that specific situation you think of the technique, and the advantage is all in your favor. But to have real value a technique should get results in dealing with any other problem of the same general kind. It is impracticable, however, to illustrate each technique in relation to every possible application. To do that would often require an entire book for a single technique. Fortunately it isn't necessary.

In general a basic technique will work anywhere, at any time. You can apply it to a child or an adult. You can apply it to a man or a woman. You can apply it to somebody richer or poorer than you, more or less experienced and intelligent than you, older or younger than you. The same technique that will induce a child to eat his spinach may be useful in getting him to wash the dishes. It may induce your banker to grant you a loan. It may persuade somebody to marry you.

Because illustrations tell so much, they had to be used. Often you may be tempted to ask, "Why should I be interested in this? I'll never face any such problem." In a super-

ficial sense, perhaps you won't. But in a fundamental sense, you will face a problem in which the pertinent technique will apply. Do not let the illustration throw you off the track. Its only purpose is to show the workings of the technique behind it. Get the technique. Use your imagination, and apply the technique where it will work for you.

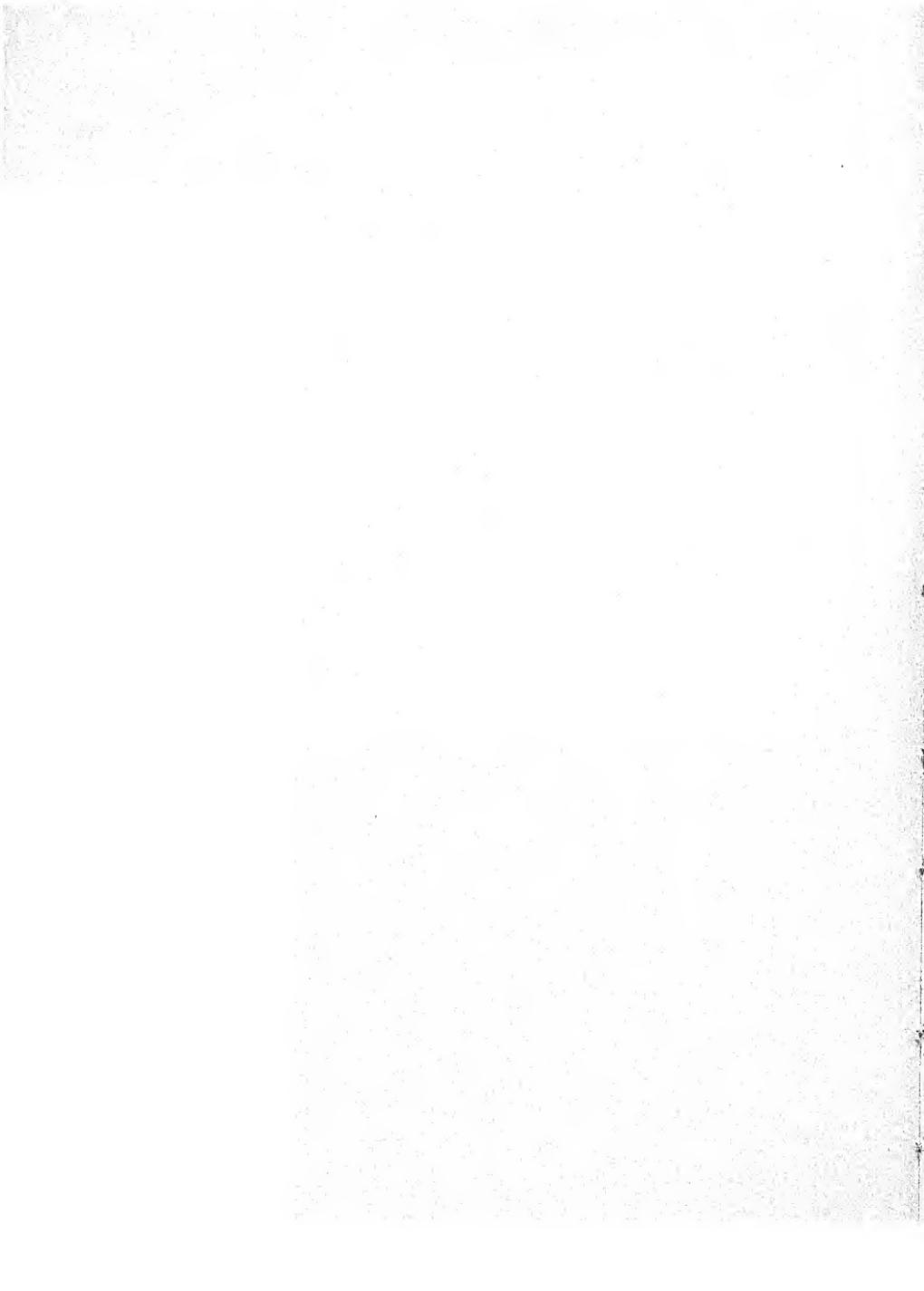
Perhaps the foregoing remarks apply less to the present volume than to the ones that follow. The reason is that we are going to start by talking about fundamental considerations in dealing with people.

The first five chapters erect much of the basic structure on which the entire series will rest. The next seven chapters discuss techniques for arousing friendliness, and certainly they are fundamental to practically any human-relations situation that may fall under any other heading. The remaining chapters present conversational techniques that will support a large proportion of all your dealings with people, whether you are making a speech, attempting to persuade, giving instructions or guidance, or building your position of influence and prestige in the minds of others.

It is my conviction that no great skill or effort is involved in the application of most of these techniques. Once you understand a technique, you will probably be able to use it successfully in your first attempt. Only when you misunderstand a technique, fail to use it at the proper time, or use it for wrong purposes, as a rule, will you get into trouble. But nevertheless, there is an opportunity to develop great skill in the art of managing your dealings with people. The way to exploit that opportunity is to master every principle and procedure that you are ever likely to need, and to do it before the time of need arrives.

The knowledge that you have gained such mastery will give you a degree of confidence that is utterly incomprehensible to the person who has not gained it himself. That

knowledge will take fear and anxiety out of your dealings with people. It will take hesitation and stumbling out of your efforts to get along with them and influence their decisions and their conduct. It will improve your emotional stability by eliminating misunderstandings and causes of personal conflicts. It will save you the necessity to correct trouble and work your way out of perplexing and difficult situations. It will let you relegate your dealings with people to the place they should occupy in your scheme of life. They will become matters of relatively little importance to you because you will promptly give every matter the sort of attention it should have. You will do it instinctively and automatically, without worrying about it, because you will have the security and sureness of touch that comes from knowing how to prevent or handle every problem.



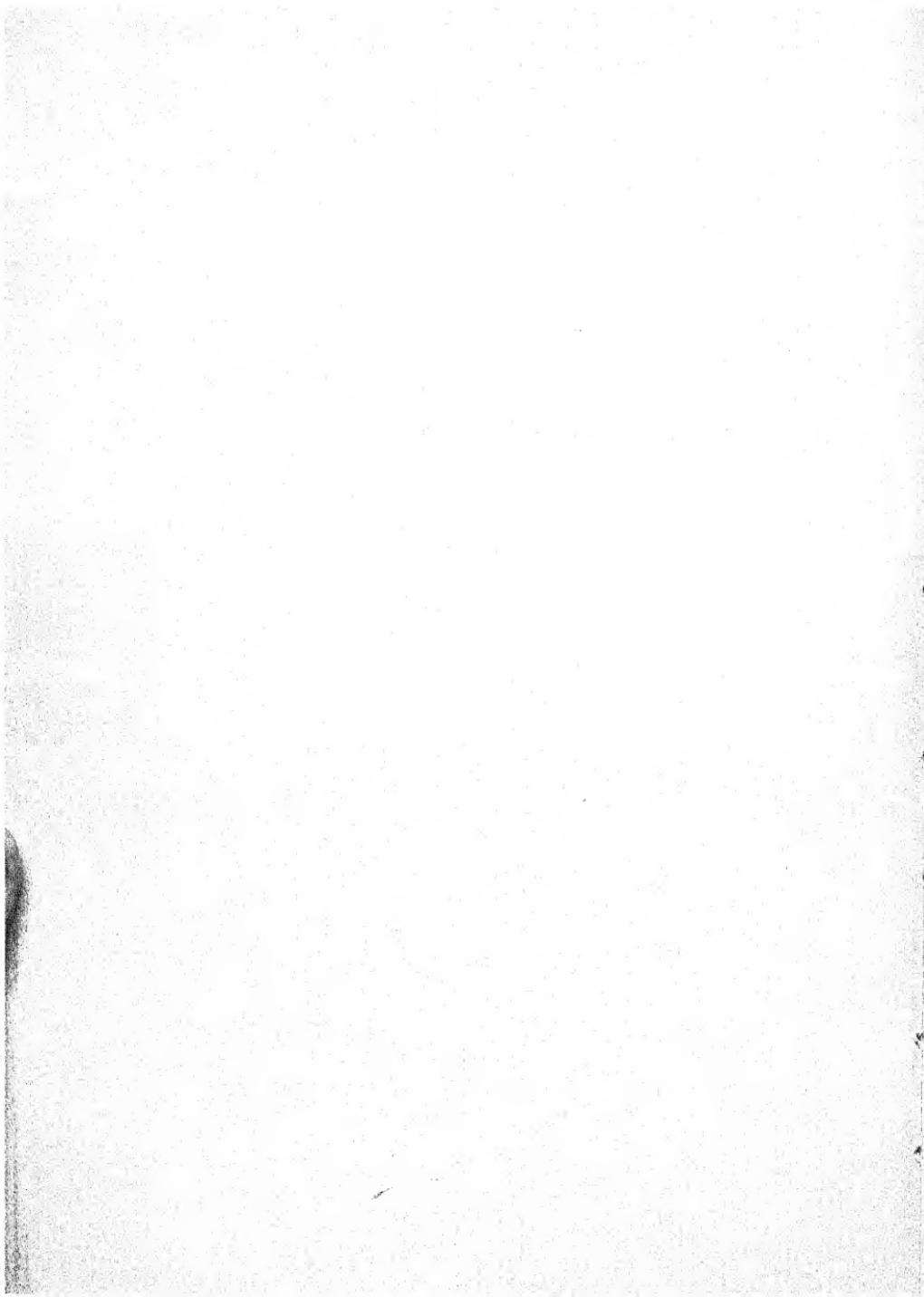
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## *Part I Learn to Understand People*

1. GIVING YOURSELF THE MAGIC TOUCH
2. STIMULATING THE DESIRED RESPONSE
3. BASIC HUMAN RELATIONS TECHNIQUES
4. A PROGRAM FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT
5. CREATING HELPFUL EMOTIONAL FORCES



## Chapter 1

### *Giving Yourself the Magic Touch*

SANDRA is a little angel. Just one look at her is an experience to remember. Immediately you go soft deep down inside. You are helpless to resist.

The longer you watch the less you can believe what you see. Each successive angle of observation seems more attractive than the last. None is disappointing. Her four-year-old size, her eager movements, her expressive face, her way of looking at you and of seeming to have a continuing interest in you even after she has turned away, combine to make you want to do something for her.

Most adults, because they tower so high, look down on a little girl. But not if the little girl is Sandra. They get right down on the floor to be as close to her as possible. She has that effect on people.

All of us have met beautiful and appealing women of all ages. We know their uncanny faculty for surrounding themselves with delicate illusions, which shatter easily if something breaks the spell. How disillusioning when some of these women begin to talk! For speech is just as revealing as appearance, and it can quickly expose the nature of anyone's hidden inner self. Unless the concealed qualities are just as beautiful as the exterior, we lose interest.

When Sandra talks she confirms every expectation. She reveals an inner self that is just as appealing as her outward

beauty. She is a born diplomat, gifted with consummate natural tact. Let us observe one of her performances.

With a playmate, Sandra approached her father where he stood on the veranda of her home. "I'll get a nickel from daddy," she promised, "and we'll go to the store." She ran to him while her shy companion held back. She flung herself into his arms and kissed him. She whispered in his ear. He probed in his pocket, sorted out a coin, and pressed it into her hand. He waved a good-by to the two children, who were running out to the sidewalk. Then he went to examine the hedge that surrounds his lawn. As he stood behind the hedge, he overheard Sandra's little friend say, "I have to cry and scream to get money."

"You won't," said Sandra, "if you ask for it the way I do. Always put your arms around your daddy's neck and kiss him. Then you'll get it."

Her father saw me approaching from down the street at that moment and said, "Well, I'll be damned!" But even as he told me what had just happened, I saw him glow with pride. He seemed to grow another inch.

In dealing with people, Sandra has the magic touch. And what is the magic touch? It is the ability to get another person to do anything within reason that you want him to do.

This story has been told to illustrate the fact that it is possible to be born into this life with such astonishing natural endowments for influencing people favorably that you do it without knowing how, and also that it is possible, even for a four-year-old, to supplement natural endowments by learning and applying techniques.

Sandra is a happy extreme. At the other end of the personality spectrum are children so savage that it is fortunate nature took the precaution of seeing that they were born small enough to handle. Most of us, somewhere between,

gradually get our corners smoothed off by the vicissitudes of daily existence. But all of us, by trying, can develop the magic touch. Those who do will have an asset for getting the most out of life.

Consider the case of Frank Finnegan. He was about fifty years old. He had been a salesman for many years, and a good one. Then along came the war, and after a while there was nothing for him to sell. He wanted to do his part, but nobody needed a salesman, and he had to go on providing a roof and food for his family.

With envious eyes, he looked at the manufacturing enterprise his brother-in-law had started before the war. It had mushroomed from an original five-dollar investment to a vital industry employing several hundred men and women. Frank wanted in. So he considered the matter carefully for several weeks. Then he approached his brother-in-law with this unusual request:

"You've been squawking about the inefficiency in your plant, and you haven't had time to make a realistic appraisal of the conditions. Let me have a try. Just call me a vice president and give me the run of your plant. If I can make material improvements after a few weeks, you can put me on the payroll for whatever I'm worth."

Frank got his chance. His job had no routine duties, which was fortunate since he knew nothing about the workings of a manufacturing plant. However, he was not lost among people. He knew more about dealing with them than little Sandra did, and he had the advantage that he knew exactly how he did it.

He gave all his dealings the personal touch. He created friendly relations between management and labor. He found out what employees were thinking and transmitted their opinions to the front office. He listened to gripes, and he uncovered and corrected personality conflicts. He ar-

gued for changes in company policy that would eliminate sources of friction and discontent. He let the employees in on some of the plans of management and made them feel like a part of the business family.

He learned to call each worker by name—by his nickname, if he had one. If any employee fell ill or had some other home problem, he rendered aid. He became a combination father confessor and personal friend. All of the workers looked on him with affection; all of them learned to call him Frank.

There is one little point, mentioned back in the beginning of this story, which I want to clear up. As you remember, I said that Frank was the president's brother-in-law. Maybe you are thinking that this had something to do with Frank's phenomenal success. It did. It made his job five times harder. When Frank had first made his appearance, one of the employees had commented, "Here's another drone to make a living out of our work!"

Frank's entering wedge had been his mastery of the magic touch, and his deft and persistent use of the magic touch overcame all difficulties. Through it he learned the business and was able to shoulder more and more responsibilities. As the weeks progressed, miracles began to happen. The workers started coming to Frank of their own volition. He handled each conversation exactly as though it involved the most important problem in the world. People went away happy. Soon the company's foremen started bringing him their troubles also, with similar results. More and more of them relied on him in a crisis. Even the executives began to consult him. It was inevitable that the words "general manager" should be added to his title.

Reading an official notice on the bulletin board, one employee remarked, "General manager? I thought that's what he was!"

Wherever people work in a group—in a community, club, lodge, church, or business—leadership gravitates to the person who has earned the friendship and confidence of his associates. Indeed, those who attract favorable attention and form solid personal attachments are often given responsibilities out of all proportion to their other qualifications.

I have sat in on many business conferences held for the purpose of considering promotions of employees. In every instance, the executives would try to find the best possible match between personal qualifications and the requirements of a job to be filled. Those conferences were held in a variety of different companies, but they were surprisingly uniform in many respects. Five salient points were revealed by them:

1. Seldom was anyone found to be ideally suited to the job higher up. In practically every instance there was ample margin for successful competition by somebody else who could convince the executives that he had *all* the requirements. And let me tell you, each group of executives would have been glad to find him!

2. Each candidate given serious consideration was well known by at least one of the conferring executives, but seldom by more than two. Usually the winning candidate was well known to the entire group. So if you want to get yourself favorably considered for promotion you must have the faculty for attracting attention from all your superiors. You must get to know them, and you must get them to know you.

3. There were several standardized requirements such as honesty, loyalty, reliability, interest, technical training, and skill. Lack of those qualities would cause any candidate to be rejected after short consideration. But possession of those qualities would not guarantee success. They were a *sine qua non*, but they were not a deciding factor unless the com-

petition was thin. Successful candidates always had something else—if it could be found.

4. Length of employment with the company was given less consideration than is popularly supposed. When length of service controls promotion, no conference is needed.

5. Prime consideration was almost always given to the ability to get along with people. Time and again, otherwise acceptable candidates were disqualified because they couldn't be trusted to manage complicated human dealings. They lost out because they lacked the magic touch. It is one of the most sought-after qualities in commerce and industry.

I have also attended many conferences in which executives considered ways of reducing overhead. In those conferences, executives would often select employees for possible elimination from the organization—mostly supervisors or other key people with jobs well worth having.

Why do you suppose people were chosen for elimination? Incompetence? Occasionally, yes. But more often they were chosen for personality reasons. They didn't push hard enough to hold their own among competitors; they were inconsiderate of people's feelings and therefore couldn't get cooperation; they themselves didn't cooperate; they were disliked and therefore couldn't lead and inspire subordinates; they couldn't handle their interdepartmental co-ordination. In short, they lacked the magic touch. It was a case of working those same five salient points in reverse.

Almost none of these people ever suspected the truth. Those denied promotion were not told why. Those selected for dismissal were given other plausible reasons. Maybe you think all this was unfair. But suppose you were a representative of the management. Would you try to jam a supervisor down the throats of subordinates just because he knew his job, without regard for the personality prob-

lems which a hated and despised executive inevitably creates? Would you accuse somebody of handling his human relations poorly, knowing in advance that he would—in full sincerity—deny the accusation? And if you had to cut down your staff, wouldn't you eliminate the trouble-makers? If you didn't, your company would be headed for trouble.

In all probability you would do just what those executives did. You would select candidates for dismissal the way they did. You would also take the precaution of concealing the true reasons from the people who were adversely affected. You would do it to protect yourself against recriminations and also to prevent injuring people's feelings.

All these conferences in various typical companies have convinced me that the ability to get along with people is a good deal more important than is generally recognized. Time and again, I have seen individuals retarded in their progress by failures that they are intelligent enough to have prevented. I have seen others forge ahead, often despite their lack of competitive technical knowledge, because they are friendly and have a faculty for getting enthusiastic co-operation even from better educated and longer established people who are smarter than themselves in the bargain! Their progress is only a logical consequence of possessing the magic touch.

Technical knowledge in your field of work is important, but it avails you little unless it is supplemented by an ability to get along with those about you. This is true not only in commerce and industry, but in every walk of life.

Knowing what your child should eat is useless unless you can get him to eat it. Having a beautiful wife or a husband who makes your blood tingle has questionable advantage unless you can learn to conduct your home life without strife. You cannot attain leadership in any club or social group unless you can command the good regard of a major-

ity. If you cannot hold your own in conversation, win people to your way of thinking when necessary, and be popular enough to keep your ego elevated, you cannot become a leader. You cannot master the art of influencing people. Perhaps you cannot be happy.

Fortunately, however, these things are easy to accomplish. The first step is to realize that your progress and welfare depend on the regard that other people have for you.

Almost everything you get comes to you more or less through the auspices of other people. Your success or failure is largely up to them. They make many decisions that determine whether you move forward or backward. They provide or withhold opportunities. Progress, material benefits, and personal satisfactions of all kinds come through your business or shop associates, members of your family, your circle of friends.

Probably the people who can crucially decide your welfare are few in number. You are in a position to influence them readily because of their proximity. There are a thousand things you can do to increase the help and cooperation these people will give you, and a thousand more that you must avoid doing in order to keep their good will. But even the casual stranger is worth winning over to your side; he may one day turn up in a position to grant you favors.

Mr. Kirby is the one who taught me that it pays to make a favorable impression on everybody. Here is the story:

When I was about twenty years old I needed a job. I was shy and hesitant about going from office to office to ask for employment, so I took what looked like the easiest route: I read the Help Wanted columns daily, until I found what looked like a good lead.

I spent an hour making myself as presentable as possible, and another hour on a streetcar going downtown. I

spent a third hour walking many times around the block. In that way I screwed up my courage to go in.

The ad said to ask for Mr. Kirby, which I did. A receptionist asked me to sit down, and I spent a fourth and fifth hour waiting!

If you can judge by an office, and you often can, Mr. Kirby was a successful businessman—a judgment that I later confirmed. But he was remiss in his methods of dealing with people.

After what seemed like interminable delay, he asked his receptionist to show me in. For fifteen minutes, Mr. Kirby asked me all sorts of personal questions. Then he described the job.

"Do you think you can fill it?" he asked. I assured him that I could.

"I think you could too," he said, "but unfortunately you're too late. The job was filled this morning. I just wanted to interview you for the additional practice and to see if you would be as good as the fellow I hired!"

I got out of Mr. Kirby's office as fast as I could.

Several years later, I held a job where my duties included hiring men. One afternoon, during a few dull moments, I was thinking of Mr. Kirby. *Never, I told myself, will I treat an applicant as he treated me.* Then there was a knock on my door, and in walked Mr. Kirby. He wanted a job!

There was some grim satisfaction in my realization that he recognized me and remembered. I hope I gave no sign that I remembered too, and I tried to make my interview as nearly opposite to his as I could. But I couldn't hire Mr. Kirby. The thought of working with him was more than I could bear.

If you are thinking that I should have been more broad-minded, you are right. But I have two things to say about

that: (1) I make mistakes the same as everybody else, and I am not setting myself up as a paragon. (2) That incident occurred at an early point in my career, before I had become cognizant of many principles presented in this book. Today I would be better able to handle the situation. But even at that, my behavior was restrained beyond what Mr. Kirby could normally have expected. It will pay you to remember that you cannot expect other people to be so exceptional that they are always willing to move over and make room for your own lack of good technique. For better or worse, it is a fact that many of them won't.

The lesson in this story is that no one of us can afford to have a single enemy. Perhaps the state of being without enemies is unattainable. Even as I write these words, I can think of a couple of people who would read my obituary with a feeling of personal satisfaction. But nevertheless I repeat that we must make every effort to prevent ourselves from being involved in animosities—or else we run the risk of some later untoward event.

We have been discussing the advantages that accrue to the individual who masters the art of managing his personal relationships. But he is not the only one to profit, for in proportion to his own success he benefits the entire human race.

He brings happiness into the lives of the people with whom he has associations. He is able to do a large amount of work, because he doesn't waste time and energy on emotional disturbance. And he adds to the accomplishments of other people as well as his own, because he is able to induce their cooperation and draw on their highest abilities. He may be handsomely paid for all this, yet that, too, is only an indication of how well the world rewards the person who manages his personal relationships well.

There is another advantage to the human race. Every person who has developed the magic touch inevitably rises as a mighty example to others. Because they see his success, he inclines them to do likewise. After all, people are somewhat like monkeys. They probably learn more from imitating each other than from all other sources combined. And the result is important if we accept—as I do—the popular belief that when people treat each other right, most of their conflicts dissolve.

Maybe you consider yourself much too small to influence the course of human events. But you aren't. Widening circles of influence emanate from everything you say and do, and so it will be for all the remainder of your life. It is within your power to decide whether that influence will be for good or bad.

It may not be your ambition to improve the human race. But before dismissing that thought as impractical, you might give close scrutiny to some of its aspects.

Whether you like it or not, you are a member of the human race. So is everybody else, all kinds of other people. Unless you are a hermit you must deal with them. In one way or another, these other members of the human race are tied up in practically all your problems. As a matter of self-defense, merely to make the going easier, you must be able to win them. You simply cannot afford to neglect developing that ability. That is the cooperative aspect of this membership in the human race.

There is also a competitive aspect. Throughout our lives, we are constantly being evaluated by our fellow men. They make comparisons between our merits and the merits of others, for all sorts of reasons. Realizing this, we struggle to improve ourselves, to get recognition, and to earn favorable judgments. Thus we acquire competitive advantages.

At first glance, these two concepts seem to be mutually self-contradictory. How can we compete and cooperate at the same time?

It is not enough to say that we can do it by seeing that fairness and good sportsmanship predominate, as in baseball or tennis, so that the best man may win. A peculiar thing about the struggle for advantages is that, in his own particular way, *everybody* can win. To the extent that people treat each other right, everybody *does* win, even in competitive pursuits. That may be hard to accept if you have just lost a job or a promotion to somebody else. And it would be impossible to accept if it were true, as the popular saying has it, that opportunity knocks but once. Fortunately we all start over again each morning. Whether we realize it or not, we have more opportunities than we can exploit. The struggle to exploit them, even when we occasionally compete without success, is one of the prime sources of our growth. Make no mistake about it—everybody can win his reward.

Try to realize that the human race is just one big family. Among its members are some you like and others you don't, some who like you and others who don't like you, people you know and people who are strangers. It will be to your advantage to treat them all in such a way as to win their favor. So recognize no distinctions among them in these respects.

Possibly you have a different set of standards for dealing with each of these groups. Most people do. But if you do, you are like the pickpocket who feels relatively virtuous about stealing from strangers, particularly those he instinctively dislikes, but who wouldn't dream of stealing from his friends.

"But," said one of my students, "there are people with whom I have nothing in common."

"Nothing in common?" I asked. "Why, you have things in common with a cockroach!" And he has.

Treat strangers the way you treat friends. Have friendly consideration for the people you dislike, and also for those who dislike you. Just because you and the other fellow rub each other the wrong way is no reason for fighting with him, even by the slight gesture of curling your lip when he comes into view. Remember that he has to make a living and get along too. You can help him, and also yourself, by trying to overcome mutual suspicion and unfriendliness. You have to take people pretty much as they are. In any case, getting along with them is good sense.

If all the prized abilities of mankind were heaped into one great stack marked "Help Yourself!" the average person would probably give first attention to the power of influence over people. In recent years no other ability has received so much emphasis as a basic tool of success, nor has any so completely appealed to public imagination. A good many surveys have shown that most of us consider ability to get along with people to be the most important single factor leading to business and personal success.

Then why do so few of us develop the magic touch? The answer leads us to consideration of a paradox.

At least in some degree, every person is an authority on how to get along with people. Did you ever walk down the street and see some utterly homely woman carrying a baby and wonder how she put it over? Did you ever stop to think that the most undiplomatic married man alive has at the very least succeeded in getting one girl to say "yes"?

All of us can point with pride to outstanding achievements of our own. We can cite examples to prove our exalted ability to influence at least one member of the human race—and probably a good many more than one.

Here are thumbnail sketches of ten people I have known who could qualify as "experts" in human relations, but who nevertheless leave much to be desired: (1) A brilliant lawyer: he could satisfy clients to the tune of six-figure annual earnings, but his wife divorced him because she couldn't get along with him. (2) A versatile young man: he could always get a job, but shortly after joining a new company he would resign or be dismissed because of some personality difficulty with a fellow employee. (3) A father: he spurred his daughter on to become a concert pianist, but his son left home at the age of sixteen because he couldn't bear the yoke of paternal domination. (4) A wife: she got herself elected president of every club she joined, but she incessantly criticized her husband in the presence of others, causing him to avoid all participation in her social life. (5) A sales promotion counselor: he could stimulate anyone else's business, yet he failed every time he set up an organization of his own. (6) A young girl: she had so many boy friends that she had to ration her dates, but none of the girls liked her. (7) An enterpriser: he spent several months lining up a group of men to back his new business financially, but he undid all his good work by making a single undiplomatic remark. (8) An executive: he toiled up the ladder of success in a business calling for unusual diplomacy and tact, but he earned the disfavor of a powerful associate, who retaliated by forcing his resignation. (9) A scintillating conversationalist: he attracted attention in any social gathering, but as a public speaker he was a complete flop. (10) A department head: he could always win enthusiastic cooperation from his employers, but his most promising subordinates resigned, one after another, because they found him unreasonable.

All these examples add up to one conclusion—however well we may handle some of our human relationships, there

are others in which we fail. Everybody has his areas of blindness. As a matter of fact, the person who taught me most about the art of influencing people (he did it by confronting me with successive examples of brilliant strategy and technique) is also the one whose failures have taught me most about what to avoid!

You can easily perceive the same sort of contradictions among your own friends and associates. Select two or three of the most diplomatic people you know, and then consider some of the blunders you have watched them make. As you read this book, you will notice a good many principles that each of them habitually violates. What will do you the most good, however, will be your growing ability to recognize similar contradictions in yourself. To help get you started, here is the story of one of my own significant lessons —out of the days when I was a cub salesman.

My boss had a slightly shopworn piece of equipment that he marked down in price for quick disposal. He asked whether I had a prospect who felt she could not quite afford to pay the regular price. I told him, "Yes."

"Get her on the telephone," he instructed me, "and invite her to come down and see this model."

I did so and then reported to my boss.

"When will she be here?" he asked.

"She won't," I replied.

"Why not?"

"Because," I said, "she's made a definite decision not to buy."

My employer looked disappointed in me. "Get her on the telephone again," he said. "Apologize for calling her back. Tell her that you had to call her again because this is a bargain such as she will not find for years to come. See what happens."

To my surprise her interest rose considerably. But I couldn't quite get her to say she would come. My boss, sensing the situation, wrote a sentence on a sheet of paper.

"Say this," he whispered.

I said it and got an improved reaction. Meanwhile, he wrote another sentence. I said that too. I read one note after another. Then the prospect got on a streetcar and came to visit our showroom.

Before I had made that second phone call, I sincerely believed that I had done everything possible to induce a sale. But in ten minutes I had been shown to be wrong. The evidence was conclusive. "Let that be a lesson to you," said my boss.

It is a dangerous thing to get the idea that we are good at handling people. There is usually someone else nearby who could show us up if he took a notion to do it. But fortunately for our peace of mind and unfortunately for our development, he usually doesn't.

It is also dangerous to close one's mind on the subject of self-improvement in respect to dealing with people. I once wrote a booklet entitled "How to Get Cooperation," which has been distributed among employees in some thousands of business firms across the country. Several months after its publication, I was engaged by one of these companies as a consultant. There I met a man who praised the booklet to the skies. He showed me his copy. It was all marked up. Passages he considered significant were underlined. I was so pleased that I commented on this to one of his associates. My comment brought a surprising response.

"That fellow," said the associate, "has always been able to get along with everybody. He is fond of people, and they like him as much as he likes them. In our whole company he probably had the least need for your booklet. But we have another fellow who thinks such stuff is bunk. He sat at

lunch with three of us just after the booklet was distributed and panned it for all he was worth. I hope you never meet him!"

"How does he get along with people?" I asked.

My informant snorted. "He doesn't. After he got up to go, the rest of us discussed him. We agreed that it would pay the company to grind up a copy of your booklet and feed it to him in a plate of soup if that would make him digest its contents. It seems as though the person who needs that sort of thing most is the one hardest to reach. I hope you will bear that in mind if you do more writing on the subject."

It is probably reasonable to say that you will make your most rapid progress if you realize your own shortcomings. It isn't necessary to admit your shortcomings to other people, although sometimes even that will help you in your personal relationships; but it is necessary to admit them to yourself. As a result, you'll have better realization of the risk under which you have been living. You'll have better understanding of the penalties you have had to pay in the past. You will have a frame of mind that makes you eager for development. Therefore you will instinctively grasp at every suggestion that may bring improvement.

Most of what we know we have learned from examples. Some of those examples represent our own experience—possibly the best, but often a difficult and costly teacher. But other examples fall under our observation in the lives of other people. In many ways it is easier to learn from the experiences in which we are not personally involved.

When you have made a mistake, you are beset by emotional reactions that color your judgment. You are embarrassed. You feel guilty. You strive to justify yourself. Or when you are the victim of somebody else's mistake, you become an injured party. Your suffering and resentment

prevent you from having an objective point of view. But when you are an innocent bystander you can honestly observe the interplay of relations between others. If you are in a position to observe people's motives, to follow their arguments, to notice their techniques and their reactions, you get a clearer and better picture than when you are emotionally involved.

From a succession of such observations come knowledge and wisdom.

Unfortunately this process of trial, error, and observation normally requires many years to provide a basis for competence, even if you derive the most from each example you encounter. By the time you master the art, even if you are a careful student of human nature, you are probably so far advanced in years that you have relatively little time left to reap your reward.

It is a purpose of this book and its successor volumes to make a sufficiently comprehensive collection of specific examples to furnish knowledge of practically every human-relations situation that any of us will normally face. As nearly as I could contrive, these books cover every important phase of the whole subject—from the average person's point of view. Their purpose is to help you to exploit your full natural opportunities and to build a satisfactory life for yourself and for those who depend on you for happiness.

Now a word as to how this job was tackled.

For almost twenty-five years, I made it my business to accumulate all significant examples of human-relations techniques that came to my attention. Those examples were drawn from reports by my students, from friends and associates, and also from personal experiences and observation. Those examples represent information digested out of achievements and failures of perhaps twenty thousand people.

The resulting accumulated data occupied a file of more than 100,000 separate sheets. Each sheet recorded the experience of some person who had successfully applied a workable technique, or who had scored a failure. Over the years, these files proved so helpful to me in solving my own human-relations problems that I felt they might do as well for others.

All this material has been organized, classified, and boiled down. Duplications have been eliminated. Similar techniques have been combined for improved effectiveness. Therefore each technique is likely to contain the best ideas from several sources. Taken together, the techniques include methods ranging all the way from the gentler shades of friendliness and persuasion to the use of almost literal force and compulsion.

The result has become a series of books. A very great deal of care and attention went into their organization plan. The tables of contents divide the subject matter into convenient chapters. They break the information down by types of problems, and each chapter has been given a descriptive title to aid in locating suggestions for any special requirement.

Go through these books from beginning to end. Familiarize yourself with every technique they contain. That comprehensive reading will give you a large supply of specific knowledge resulting from the successes and failures of others. Thus fortified, you can often avoid the hard lessons that gave them their understanding. You can learn from them instead of from experience.

Probably at some time in your life you will be glad to have familiarity with almost every technique described in these pages. Again I affirm my belief that the average person needs working familiarity with all of them to gain full

mastery of the problem of managing his human relationships with outstanding success.

By transferring this material from the book to your mind, you will prepare yourself to solve innumerable personality problems. You will prepare yourself to influence people and assume leadership in more ways than you now imagine possible. At the same time, you will gain familiarity with the books' general classification plan and, afterward, you will find it unexpectedly easy to relocate, through the tables of contents, any technique that you might desire to study in relation to some particular need.

All of the illustrations are factual in origin, but nearly all of them have intentionally been disguised to destroy recognition by persons who might identify their participants. Except in a few instances (all cases where no danger of resentment exists), the names are fictitious. These precautions have been taken because only a frank and outspoken presentation can be fully useful. I wanted freedom to include illustrations uncomplimentary to those who figured in them—including myself!

It should be evident that using a real name often necessitates getting permission from the owner of that name. I can think of no more effective way to guarantee against inclusion of any example that is uncomplimentary to the person involved. But I am not judging or criticizing anybody in this book; I have been concerned solely with writing what would do the maximum good. Besides, since it is entirely human to make mistakes, the fact that a person does so should in no wise be held against him. And since this book deals with principles and procedures rather than with individual people, those compromises entail no loss.

Now let's get started.

## Chapter 2

### *Stimulating the Desired Response*

AT THE age of seventeen I bought my first automobile, a rickety old Ford. It had certainly seen better days, but it gave me a gigantic thrill and a more dynamic sense of power than I have ever been able to get from any of its nine successors, superior though they were.

One Saturday afternoon, while I was driving along a secluded river road, that feeling of ecstasy was shattered.

A large and vastly more powerful car appeared from behind. With a sudden burst of speed it pulled ahead. In doing so it nearly crowded my old rattletrap into the ditch. Then it slowed down just as suddenly, and almost forced me to stop.

*Who, I muttered through my teeth, does he think he is?*

I had been collecting money all day from the sale of kitchen utensils during the preceding two weeks. I had more of it in my pocket, several times over, than I had ever seen at any one time outside a bank.

Two tough-looking men in a car crowding me off the road, it seemed to me, could mean only one thing. So, to get out of that predicament—and fast!—I opened the throttle and swerved to the left. Slowly the motor responded. Before the occupants of the other car could alight, I slid past and on ahead, wondering what would happen next.

Would I have any money left for my date that night? Would I get beaten up? Would I land in a hospital? Would my corpse be found in the river? I had no doubt that the other car would overtake me again. It did, and practically the same scene was re-enacted.

After the second escape my hopes rose. Maybe I could get out to the main road and have a chance of scaring off my pursuers by attracting help. But that car again roared past. Its driver jammed on the brake and skidded his car to a sidewise halt, effectively blocking the road. Both men got out, one from each side, while I was still struggling to avoid a crash. The nearest one poked a revolver into my ribs.

"Out!" he said.

I did exactly as he commanded.

Then he went on, "I'm sorry we had to play rough." With his free hand, he turned back his coat and disclosed a badge. "Three hours ago there was a bank robbery. The crook had a car like yours, with a suitcase in the back seat. You may not be the fellow we want, but we aim to find out."

I assured him that there were only cooking utensils in the suitcase.

"We'll give you the benefit of the doubt," he said, "but we'll also examine the suitcase."

He did, with the help of his assistant. But he didn't put his gun away until every possible hiding place had been inspected. Then he apologized—in a most gentlemanly manner—and released me.

So I swallowed my heart and climbed back into my Ford, congratulating myself. I would keep my money, a whole skin, my old car, and my date too!

This story illustrates two fundamental ways of influencing people. Both ways are deadly efficient. They get results.

The first way is this: *Compel* the other person to do what you want him to do. Those officers had wanted me to stop, so they slued their car across the road, and I had to stop.

The second way is this: Make the other person afraid *not* to do what you want him to do. The two men had wanted me to get out of my car and stand still. The whole attitude of the man who poked a pistol into my ribs said that if I disobeyed I would be shot. So I stood still. I complied with instructions that were backed by superior force. Again, they got what they wanted.

These two techniques are useful in many situations. Their effectiveness is not to be gainsaid, and there are circumstances under which nothing else will do. They are the routine tools of law enforcement. They are also effective tools under many other conditions.

Walking down a city street one day, I purposely elbowed a little old lady right across the sidewalk. A moment later she thanked me for it. Why? Simply because she had been about to step into an open coalhole.

Here are other examples of the use of these techniques: A man saved a boy from an oncoming streetcar by means of a flying tackle; a wife kicked her husband's shins as they sat at a table to stop him from spilling some choice gossip in the presence of one of the principals; an office boy knocked a glass from his employer's hand, realizing that medicine had been poured from the wrong bottle.

There are times when coercion is the proper tool for getting results. But since the victim of the coercion might not be able to see the reason himself, you had better have a satisfactory excuse for it in mind and you will be a good deal better off to have one so obvious that it need not be mentioned.

Obviously coercion, when you are in a position to apply it properly, affords a perfect method of stimulating action.

Carefully applied, fear is almost as conducive to action as coercion. The essential difference between the two ways of getting action is that coercion depends on your motive power, whereas fear depends on the other person's motive power. You get him to act by making him afraid of the consequences if he doesn't act. By means of fear it is possible to influence his behavior in many ways and to release his emotional forces in the desired direction.

In the eyes of enlightened society, some methods of doing this are good, some bad. This applies even to physical violence. It all depends on the motive and surrounding circumstances. Coercion used in self-defense, for example, is good. Used in the perpetration of a crime, it is bad. For the method to be good, the degree of violence must not be excessive. A parent may spank his child for an infraction of discipline, but he may not beat the child.

Coercion and fear techniques are quite drastic. But they are used every day in business and in private life. Usually, even when unfair, they involve no infraction of law. Let us consider an example.

Conrad DeHaven was ambitious. He had worked for the same small, closely held manufacturing company for twenty years. By loyalty, diligence, and hard work, he had gradually made his way upward, becoming secretary and purchasing agent.

All during this time Conrad had saved money. He had accumulated a respectable nest egg. This he desired to employ gainfully, preferably in the one business he knew best. So, when a bank offered him the chance to bid for three hundred shares of his company's stock, he grasped it. The transaction was perfectly legitimate and proper. But Conrad had reckoned without his boss.

Cornelius Grant, president of the company, sent for him

three days later. Conrad didn't know what for, but he soon found out.

"So," stormed Mr. Grant, "you are the man who bid against me for those 300 shares!"

Conrad paled. "Yes, sir," he said, "but I didn't know it was you!"

"Well, let me tell you this," continued Mr. Grant in a voice tense with suppressed fury. "You can now choose between two courses of action. You can sell that stock to the company, or you can resign. Take your choice."

Conrad valued his job. It was the only business where he'd had experience. So he sold. But during the next few years, as he watched that stock earn huge profits and treble in value, he carried a smoldering resentment against the man who had forced a wedge of fear between himself and security.

It is true that you can drive a person to action or inaction through fear. But people will hate you for it. Their bitterness will prompt them to incessant alertness for a chance to pay you back.

Here is another case: John Spear had a mind as sharp as his name. Often he used it to jab people where it would hurt the most. As general manager of a large manufacturing company he was in charge of several plants, and he was able to inflict his refined torture on many people.

"When I walk into any department of this company," he told me, "every man in the place starts to tremble. I've taken pains to make them fear me. I never have trouble handling them."

May the good Lord open his mind. If he doesn't, sooner or later some shop mechanic may do it—with a monkey wrench!

Once I watched while general manager John Spear gave one of his subordinates a "treatment." Skillfully he sought

out the employee's vulnerable spots; viciously he stuck the probing knife of criticism into each. He was right in what he said, you can bet; he saw to that. No man who uses such tactics can afford vulnerability in his own position. So, with a feeling of complete safety, he played cat-and-mouse for half an hour. One malicious attack followed on the heels of another. I could almost hear him thinking to himself, *This fellow will never cross me up again!* I was mighty glad when it was over.

Yes, you can dominate a person through fear. But you had better not come to him later on seeking favors. And you had better not let yourself get caught needing these favors. Besides, you must be in a more influential position than he is, and your strength must be greater than his. And you must not let yourself get caught off guard.

It is worth while to point out that coercion and fear, among adults, are usually short cut methods that are adopted because the one who resorts to them—for the purpose of inducing action—lacks ingenuity to find a better way. There is an old Chinese saying that when two men argue the loser is he who strikes the first blow because he thereby convicts himself of having run out of ideas. Also, resort to such methods is a throwback to infancy. Many a child dominates his mother through fear by holding his breath or by banging his head against the floor until, in panic, she yields. Possibly the adult who leans too heavily on fear and coercion shows a return to childhood habits.

Of course, this does not mean that fear is never to be used as an instrument of persuasion. Once I was crossing a street with General W. W. Atterbury when he said, "If you don't slow down you are likely to get run over." There are times when the fear technique is ideal, and examples of it will be mentioned in following pages. But using fear or coercion as a ruthless means of getting your way is almost

always a mistake. There are better ways of inducing people to act as you desire. These ways carry no flavor of coercion, and they work equally well whether the other person is stronger or weaker than you are. Let me explain by means of an illustration.

Johnny O'Keefe was a boy I knew in second grade. He had more energy than all his classmates put together. But he had no sense of direction, and he did not know the meaning of discipline or self-restraint. He caused more trouble than all the rest of us combined.

All during first grade, Johnny had been the scourge of his teacher. Broken windows, noise, confusion, and fights trailed him in all his pursuits. Second grade started out the same way. But his new teacher stood for that just about a week, and then she astonished the class by the action she took. It caught Johnny off his guard.

One morning just before recess she called Johnny to the front of the room. "I have an important job for you," she said. That was a complete reversal of anything we had previously heard said to Johnny by a teacher, and we were puzzled. Johnny looked puzzled too. But his chest swelled nevertheless.

"I want you to be my little policeman," the teacher continued. "When the bell rings for recess, I want you to make a beeline for the door. Be the first in line. Stand there until everybody else is in order behind you. Look back and make sure the line is straight. Then lead the whole class right out into the yard.

"When the bell rings at the end of recess, do the same thing. Be the first one in line. Turn around and make sure the line is straight. Then lead the class back into the room."

During her remarks Johnny's chest grew bigger and bigger. Just to show his exuberance, he gave it a couple of thumps.

"Do you think," asked the teacher, "that you can do all that?"

Vigorously Johnny nodded, "Yes!"

Possibly for the first time in his life, his energy was geared to a specific task that he wanted to perform.

It took me twenty years to figure out that teacher's technique. She knew human nature. Because she did, and because she worked out a successful plan for applying her knowledge, she had no more trouble with Johnny O'Keefe.

Her strategy worked, simply because she recognized that Johnny had a desire to achieve importance. He expressed this desire by attracting attention, good or bad, in every conceivable way. His wanting to be important, combined with his abundant energy and almost complete freedom from the civilizing influence of effective discipline, guaranteed an explosive result. The discerning teacher furnished Johnny with a constructive outlet that would bring his energies under control. She gave him a new and attractive way of doing what he had inherently wanted to do all his life: to be a leader. So she got results.

This brings us to a great fundamental lesson.

Influencing people, as a practical matter, involves only three basic instruments of persuasion: coercion, fear, and, as we have just seen, desire. You can take your choice. They all work. But if you get the habit of relying solely on the first two, you will almost surely destroy your ability to rely on the third. In that case you may expect considerable opposition. But by hitching your aims to the other person's desires, you can make him susceptible to practically any degree of influence your ingenuity can provide. He'll like you for it, and he'll even help you to wield your influence over him.

Sometimes, in the process, you can overcome formidable resistance, as is shown in the following example.

Carol was three years old. She loved people and liked to catch their attention. One evening when her mother and father had visitors, she felt that she wasn't getting enough attention, and she began showing off. At first the visitors thought it was cute. I know, because I was one of them. But Carol's exuberance ran wild.

When her father thought she had gone far enough, he scooped her up from the floor and sat her down on her own little chair. "If Carol is a good girl," he said, "she can go up to her warm, cozy bed in just a few minutes. Won't that be nice?"

"Yes," said Carol, her interest aroused. "Won't that be nice?"

I could hardly believe my ears and eyes. Recollections of my early childhood came tumbling forth. I had never wanted to go to bed unless I was sick. Maybe that was partly because I had so often been sent there as punishment. But here the problem of getting a child to go to bed was solved with a new twist. After Carol had been tucked away for the night, I questioned her parents.

"We have always made her bed seem comfortable and attractive to Carol," her mother told me. "We have held it out as a reward instead of a threat. Because of this, she's always willing to go, even when she isn't tired enough to sleep right away."

Here Carol's father cut in.

"I used to get so exasperated, when visiting our friends and relatives who had children, with the bickering and arguments that arose when bedtime came. I noticed that the idea of going to bed was associated in children's minds with the concept of punishment. The more their parents insisted, the more the children resisted, until finally there would be an explosion, and at last the youngsters would be driven or carried up the stairs, frequently crying all the way. So even

before Carol was born, we decided nothing of that kind was going to happen in *our* house."

That little story illustrates several points. First, you can almost always get the other person to do what you want him to do, providing your suggestion stimulates his own desires. Second, you can get him to stop undesirable performance by diverting his attention to something that attracts his interest more strongly. Third, you can stimulate action by holding out some reward that he desires ardently enough to pay its price or to overcome his inertia. And fourth, by repetition of suitable strategy, you can gradually develop in him a habit of complying with good suggestions.

You can do these things by using the power of some existing desire, by finding a hidden desire and fanning it into flame, or by stimulating development of some entirely new desire. If you identify the other person's motive with your own, you make suitable action on his part just as important to him as it is to you. If you do this skillfully enough, your influence will have all the strength of coercion, and none of the disadvantages. The other person may make an even greater effort to do your bidding than you made to induce such action in the first place.

The first big secret of influencing people is this: Line up the other person's incentives to action. Spur him on to want to gain some advantage that he cannot gain unless he takes the action you desire him to take. See that his motives are strong enough to overcome any inertia or other obstacles. Then compliance will become his path of least resistance. Human nature being what it is, he will almost certainly provide the desired action.

About fifteen years ago one of my students—Earl Gibson, as we shall call him—asked for advice. "How," he inquired, "can I blackjack a raise out of my boss?"

Yes, *blackjack*.

"Every Thursday afternoon at three o'clock," he went on, "I walk into his office and remind him that I haven't had a raise for two years. I've told him I have a wife to provide for and three children to bring up. I've talked about younger members of the organization who get more money than I do. I've used up all the arguments I can think of, and he's answered by using up all the objections and excuses. We're both running out of ideas, but I still haven't got my raise!"

Earl had the habit of making ridiculous requests. And his boss had the habit of turning him down.

We decided on a new approach. Earl accepted the fact that under existing conditions a raise would be impossible to get. So he put it out of his mind. He concentrated on preparing himself for a better job somewhere else. To accomplish this, he determined to use his position as a springboard. As a part of this program he would get his work into apple-pie order and pave the way for a good recommendation from his employer. He would stop griping. He would replace his recriminations with actions that would satisfy the boss and win his approval. He would look for ways to assume additional responsibilities—not authority, mind you, but responsibilities.

After this program was well under way, Earl started writing a letter advertising himself. "It would be wonderful," I told him, "if you could say that you are well liked by your fellow workers. Can you?"

Earl hesitated. "No," he said after some delay. "I guess not."

"Then get busy and do something about it," I said.

He acted on this advice. And he weighed his other shortcomings, always with the intention of producing a stronger and more effective application for employment. He stuck to this regimen for several months. And then things happened.

He got a promotion. Next he got a raise. Then he forgot all about his application for other employment.

Three years after this episode I happened to meet Earl's boss. We became well acquainted, and after mutual confidence had been established, I made guarded inquiries about Earl Gibson.

"Earl," said his boss, "has become a valuable man. During the past couple of years he's had several important promotions. I've raised his pay several times and will raise it again, because I wouldn't want to lose him. Before that, for several years, I wouldn't have cared. He was always griping, and he seemed more interested in getting raises than in working for the company. Then he must have had a shot in the arm—or something!"

We could go through a succession of similar illustrations, but all of them would make the same point: Try to get the other fellow to do what you want him to do for *your* reasons, and you will probably fail. But make it easier for him to give you what you want than to refuse—give him enough incentive to overcome all natural resistance—and you will succeed. This is one of the fundamental truths to remember in dealing with people. It works like magic.

Now we come to the second big secret of influencing people, which I will illustrate by telling two stories.

Some years ago I witnessed an automobile accident. Two drivers were involved, both of them middle-aged men. One, starting up in anticipation of a green light, made his car a perfect target for the other, who, for his part, was trying to beat a stop signal. The side of the first car certainly looked like a \$300 loss. Simultaneously, each driver got out of his respective car to inquire into the financial responsibility of the other. *Now, I thought to myself, we'll see what happens when an immovable object is struck by an irresistible force!*

Two men, ready to make mutually contradictory accusations, approached each other. Suddenly to my considerable surprise, each also recognized the other. They turned out to be old friends.

Never have I seen two people so quickly change their attitudes. The argument that I had considered inevitable did not take place. Scowls were replaced by smiles—smiles that were friendly but a bit sheepish. They shook hands. Each expressed his regret over the incident, and his concern for the other's physical welfare. Then each got into his car and drove off.

The point is simply this: It is easy for your friends to go along with your ideas and difficult for them to cross you. Though a good percentage of anybody's dealings will probably be with complete strangers, it is often astonishingly easy to create a condition of friendliness on short notice, no matter how thoroughly the cards appear to be stacked against it.

Later, I had a little accident myself. In a small Midwestern city, a car traveling in the opposite direction to mine suddenly cut across my path. There was nothing I could do except run into it, swerving as much as possible to avoid the full impact.

Of course, it was entirely the other driver's fault. Isn't it always? Nevertheless, he got out of his car and approached me belligerently. It was, he said, all my fault.

Looking over his shoulder, I spoke to his wife. "Are you hurt?" I asked.

"No," she answered, "I guess not."

Behind her shoulders, in the package rack of their coupe, I saw a baseball bat and a fielder's glove. So I turned again to the driver of the car.

"If you and I had met at a ball game," I said, "and happened to be rooting for the same team, I guess we'd soon be good friends!"

He looked at me suspiciously. "We didn't meet at a ball game," he said.

"Well, why don't we *act* as though we had?" I suggested. "Right now we're in a disagreeable situation, and I guess that little pretense would make both of us more comfortable." Then I added, as an afterthought, "And our wives too."

He looked into my car. "Is your wife hurt?" he asked.

"No," I told him. "And I'm glad yours isn't either." Then I suggested, "Let's look over the damage."

While we were inspecting the two cars, I learned that he was employed in an automobile repair shop that was just around the corner. We agreed to drive our cars over there for such immediate attention as they required.

While my repairs were in progress, the driver of the other car disappeared. Presently he returned. "My wife," he said, "is sitting in our car crying. She's going to have a baby next month, and I'm worried about her. You got me calmed down out there on the street, a little while ago. Would you talk to her and see if you can make her feel better?"

So I had a friendly chat with her. So did my wife. It was all very chummy.

When the work was completed, I asked for a bill. The service manager looked surprised. "Oscar said he was paying for this," I was told. So I went over to thank my erstwhile adversary.

"Don't mention it," he said. "As a matter of fact, it was my fault. Besides, I'm mighty glad it was a nice fellow like you that ran into me. To tell you the truth, I had just had a couple of drinks. That's why my wife was so worried. She was afraid I'd shoot off my big mouth and land in jail!"

I drove on, thinking how fortunate I had been to witness that earlier accident in which two opponents had dropped their antagonism as soon as they had discovered they were friends.

Here is the second big secret of influencing people: Create a favorable emotional climate, an atmosphere conducive to cooperation and good will. Do this by generating a high degree of friendliness. Feel it yourself, express it, infect the other person with it. As a result it will become easier for him to go along with your ideas, harder to oppose them. He will tend to follow the path of least resistance.

Of course, this does not mean that you can ram unsound ideas into the head of a discerning person, in the name of friendship. As a rule you cannot put over an idea or sell a product unless it is fundamentally sound and acceptable. But it will be a great deal easier for you to persuade someone to accept your idea or product if he likes you. It will also be a great deal easier for you to get him to listen to your story in the first place.

Little you can say or do will suit the person who dislikes you. He will instinctively search out your personality flaws, possibly magnifying them into cardinal sins. He will tend to withhold any support and assistance you need, and may throw stumbling blocks into your path. But the person who likes you will feel warm and friendly in your presence. He will instinctively excuse behavior that would otherwise cause him offense. He will cooperate, accede to your plans, adapt himself to your requirements. When he can, he will probably clear obstacles out of your path.

So it is important to create favorable associations in every way possible. It will be worth money in the bank to surround yourself with people who want to do something for you because they like you.

Andy Hopkins had trouble applying this principle. As a production supervisor in charge of twenty-four women, Andy was coldly efficient. I have used the word coldly with calculated intent. "I don't care whether these girls like me or not," Andy told me. "All I care about is that they produce!"

They did produce—but grudgingly. They kept Andy up to his neck in hot water. They sassed him, tried to get by with inferior work, whispered about him behind his back, contrived schemes for putting him in a bad light, and carried tales to his boss. They gave him a case of stomach ulcers. Finally, after they had almost succeeded in putting the skids under him and sliding him out of his job, Andy woke up.

"If you don't learn to get along with those girls," said his boss, "you can choose between getting another job or going back to work at a bench!"

So it was squarely up to Andy.

"Sure, they're unfair," said his boss. "They've been taking advantage of you. They're out to get you if they can. They don't like you any more than they would like having the hives."

"What do you think I should do?" asked Andy.

"If I were in your spot," answered the boss, "I would put my pride in my pocket, and I'd woo these women, one after another, until they started pulling for me instead of against me. I would pick out the ringleaders, and work on them first. Take Yetta, for example. She has a child two years old. Did you know that?"

"No, I didn't."

"Well, you should have known. That child is Yetta's life. He is also her weakness. Talk to her about him. Then find out what means most to the other girls, and talk to them about those things. Get into their good graces. They won't be looking for ways to make you miserable if they like you.

"You know your job. You ought to be able to make good at it. But you never will unless you learn how to get along with those women."

Andy walked out of his boss's office and into his own department. As he passed Yetta's bench, he could see that she was sulking. Somehow he sensed that she was about

to make a sarcastic remark to the girl next to her. With his boss's rebuke hot in his mind, he felt like hitting her over the head with a monkey wrench. Then, with a sudden impulse, he stopped and said, "Say, I just heard you have a two-year-old boy. Is that right?"

Sullenly she answered, "Yes."

"Well," said Andy, "he's just the same age as mine!"

In spite of herself, Yetta smiled.

Then Andy went on. "Tell me something. Does every child that age like his mother better than his father?"

This time Yetta laughed. She also began to talk. She kept on for several minutes. Her enthusiasm mounted. She was on her favorite topic.

Andy's enthusiasm mounted too—not only because he enjoyed the conversation—but also because he realized his boss had put him on the right track. There was more to be done, of course, but the first step had been taken. Three months later, Andy's department was breaking all previous production records.

By such procedures as these, to a great extent, you can control the treatment you receive from other people.

The hardheaded businessman is just as susceptible to effective strategy as anyone else. You can play him like a pipe organ if you take the trouble to learn the keys and the stops.

Basically the idea is this: You can predispose a person either in your favor by making him like you, or against you by incurring his dislike. But almost always the way to influence a person is to make him want to do the things you want him to do.

So here are the two basic secrets of influencing people. First: Give the other fellow plenty of reasons for doing what you want him to do. Hold forth some desirable reward he can get in no other way, and make the wanted per-

formance represent his path of least resistance. And second: Create a favorable personality atmosphere that will surround the other fellow and yourself, every time you get together. Base that personality atmosphere on mutual friendliness and good will, so that each of you will instinctively try to suit the other. Remember those two secrets—they will reappear in various forms throughout this book.

## Chapter 3

### *Basic Human Relations Techniques*

YEARS ago, while taking a course in applied psychology, I got into an argument with my instructor. "In dealing with people," he said, "the most important thing to remember is that they are all different. Don't think that what works with one will work with another, because two people may be influenced in opposite ways by the same technique. Therefore it is necessary to study each person carefully enough to determine his avenues of appeal and his ways of reacting to them. Only after you have done so can you hope to become expert in stimulating his responses as you desire."

This seemed to me to raise unnecessary difficulties, for I favor simplification as an aid to understanding and application of knowledge. I entered a protest.

"People's characteristics vary widely," I agreed, "but isn't it true that they are far more alike than they are different? They have the same number of arms and legs. They have the same number of senses, identical in their functions and purposes. The differences between people are due to those qualities that set them apart. These qualities may be fundamental to the individual, but the similarities are fundamental to the race. So why can't we base our techniques on the similarities, with the expectation that they will influence everybody in much the same way?"

The instructor looked as though he wished I would crawl into the woodwork.

"Because psychology teaches us," he patiently explained, "that the differences between people are fundamental. You can put a coin into any gum-dispensing slot machine and always get a piece of chewing gum as your response. You can always get that response because every such slot machine is built to respond mechanically in precisely that way. But people are not built alike and consequently do not respond alike."

I struggled against a temptation to comment on the percentage of slot machines that fail to deliver anything at all. But I had no chance to retort, for the instructor was warming up on a favorite subject.

"A human being reacts," he went on, "in accordance with the peculiarities of his nature. He is influenced by his individual fears, hopes, and desires. We cannot safely compare him with a mechanical device. So, in dealing with people, we must recognize the basic fact that people are all different."

I could hardly wait to cut in on this.

"Suppose," I said, "that I were to go around this room with a pin, sticking it into one person after another. Wouldn't you be able to predict what would happen?"

The professor beamed. "Let's just ask various members of this class what they would do," he suggested.

In rapid succession he polled several of my fellow students for their opinions. One would hit me with a book; another would knock me flat on my face; a third would recommend that I be put into a padded cell; a fourth was frank enough to admit that he would probably yell. Such answers, it was evident from the instructor's expression, proved his point. Because my classmates resorted to such ingenuity in demonstrating their lack of standardization, I conceded the argument. But I did so partly because I was outvoted.

The instructor then closed in for the kill.

"If you hit a ball with a bat," he said, "you know exactly what the result will be. But if you hit a man with a bat, the only thing you know is that you don't know what will happen." That ended the matter.

Since then I have given the subject considerable thought, and I have figured out the things I should have said but didn't. I might have said that it is almost completely safe to predict that practically any person you stick a pin into, if you do it hard enough, will make an outcry. If he is convinced that you did it on purpose, he will also show resentment, and his friendliness toward you will wane. That much of his reaction, at least, is predictable. A similarly safe prediction can be made if you hit a man with a bat, with this addition. If you hit him hard enough, and in the right place, he will stop whatever he is doing and lapse into everlasting sleep.

It might also be worth while to point out that when I am lucky enough to hit a ball with a bat, neither I nor anyone else can predict the course it will take.

This classroom argument has been presented because it reveals two opposing schools of thought. As is usually the case, there is merit in each.

People do have similarities. Because of them, it is possible, with sound basic technique, to influence almost anybody and get a reasonably satisfactory result. By means of such technique, magazines, books, radio programs, and motion pictures attract and satisfy audiences running into millions. Mass production of many manufactured articles, such as automobiles, is practicable only because of the similarity of individuals. Indeed, if it were not for that similarity how could a medical doctor diagnose even so simple a disease as measles?

This principle of similarity obviously applies in human relations. There are many basic appeals that can be expected to reach just about everybody, and by their use probably most of anyone's dealings with people can be handled successfully. If this were not true, there would be little use in attempting to formulate principles of action. There would be no general procedures to learn and apply.

So there *are* universal techniques, and great advantages result from understanding them. A universal technique must always be geared to one or more of those desires, likes or dislikes, fears, or compulsions that you can safely assume actuate every normal person. There are many inclinations and emotions that are common to all. Practically everybody likes to eat when hungry, to have money, to live in comfort. Almost everybody has a feeling of importance and likes to talk about himself and air his opinions. You are safe in assuming that anybody will react unfavorably to an intentional kick in the shins, to a remark that hurts his feelings, or to any act that detracts from his happiness. There are universally effective ways of making enemies, and there are universally effective ways of stimulating friendliness.

But let me hasten to be fair by admitting that my instructor was right too. Just as similarities between people will cause them to react to the same thing in the same general way, so their differences will cause them to react in a predictable way only when the individual's peculiar ambitions, interests, experiences, and dislikes are known. It is important, in any situation, to judge whether the similarities or the differences will be in control. If the former, then a universal technique will suffice; if the latter, the technique must be specialized to fit the individual.

The concept of similarity between people can be extended to include even a consideration of their differences. For example, it is universally true that people have special

motives peculiar to themselves, and that everybody desires to advance and satisfy his own interests. This in itself is a universal urge.

Thus there are two basic kinds of technique for influencing people. The first is universal, and the second is specialized to fit the individual. Surprisingly often you can simplify making your choice between the two by following this rule: Use only a technique so firmly rooted in fundamentals that it can be expected to be universally effective, but tailor it to fit the patterns of behavior of the person with whom you are dealing.

To sum up, let me tell you the story of an executive who faced the problem of influencing his subordinates in the direction of turning out more work.

"I was just like a mother," he said, "with nine refractory children. Or maybe I should say a stepmother, because the department had been run for eleven years by a man who had the habit of taking things too easy. Because the department had become a bottleneck, he was 'kicked upstairs,' and his job was turned over to me.

"The first thing I did was to call the department employees together. I told them that whether they liked it or not, I was the new boss. 'You have to get along with me,' I said, 'and I have to get along with you. If you want to, you can make things easy for me. If you do this, I'll return the favor by doing everything I can for you. But so that you will understand the situation, I want to indulge in a little straight talk.

"This department has been under fire for several months. Management has threatened to clean it out completely and start over again with a new group. You don't want to see that happen any more than I do. If we work together, it won't.

"To protect ourselves, we must improve our efficiency. You know as well as I do that certain conditions have made such improvement difficult in the past. Those conditions will be corrected. But I need your cooperation.

"In tackling this job, I have one strong advantage. All of you are my personal friends. I've worked with you a long time, and you have shown your friendship for me. Therefore I know in advance that you will back me up, and for the same reason you know that I will fight your battles. We are all in the same boat, and we can do a lot for each other. The best way to do it is to get our boat shipshape and earn the respect of management—beginning this week. That is all I want to say to you as a group, but during the next few days I will have an individual discussion with each of you."

Everything this executive said during his talk was calculated to reach each member of the department. To an extent, he aroused each man's fear. But he took the precaution of placing himself on their side. He capitalized on past friendship, and he made it clear that all changes would work out to the advantage of everybody, including himself. He aroused each man's desire to keep out of trouble and improve his security. That was his universal approach.

Then he gave each individual specialized attention.

"The first man I talked with," he told me, "was ambitious. So I gave him an assignment that would draw on his higher capabilities and give him a chance to shine. The second was acquisitive, and he wanted a raise, so I mapped out a program of accomplishment and assured him that the raise would be forthcoming as soon as he fulfilled it. The third was excessively talkative, and to him I allocated the responsibility of handling all interdepartmental telephone calls. In each case I gave the individual something he wanted, and got something I wanted in return. It worked like a charm. Eight months later I was promoted into a new position, and the

ambitious member of my group became the new department head."

Here were applications of both the universal and specialized technique. They were based on the two human-relations fundamentals: Arouse the other person's friendliness, and make him want to do the thing you want him to do. Anybody who can use these techniques in his dealings with people will find himself the fortunate possessor of what I have called, in an earlier chapter, the magic touch.

These techniques will be discussed throughout this book. It will help you to understand them better if they are first broken down into some of their major parts.

One of the easiest ways to stimulate good human relations is to cultivate the knack of making yourself feel at home with all sorts of people. If you are beset by self-consciousness, fears, and inhibitions, if you are at a loss for conversational material, and if you prefer solitude or the companionship of books, you will find it difficult to cultivate that knack. But if you feel at home with others, progress will be easy.

Lester Collins is a case in point. From early childhood he preferred to be alone. People annoyed him, so he stayed away from them—at least, whenever he could. As a consequence he was not very well liked.

"During the process of failing in one job after another," he said, "I noticed that the people who get along in business are the ones who get along with people. But I had no gift of gab. Nor did I have any desire for it."

"Then came the depression. It was a blessing in disguise that I lost my job and had to scratch for another. I answered a succession of newspaper advertisements, and practically all of them turned out to be commission selling. I think I rejected twenty-five offers. Then I happened upon the right offer and the right man.

"He told me that every young man, at some time in his life, should learn to sell, and that he should take the sort of sales training which his company was prepared to offer. Even if the young man ultimately went into some other kind of work, the advantage of such training would stay with him always. The experience of meeting all sorts of people in all walks of life, of getting acquainted with them and talking to them, of listening and noticing how they react, was too valuable for anybody to miss.

"'Of course,' said the older man, 'you will be timid about it at first. But as you gain experience, that trouble will vanish. And you will get the thrill of your life out of realizing that you can meet any man on an equal footing.'

"He went on to say how much money I could make, but I was no longer interested in that part of the story. He had sold me an idea, and I was convinced that it was good. So I took the job. I worked at it for almost two years, and by that time I was at home with people. Every time I think of that man who talked me into a selling job, my heart is warm with gratitude."

Maybe you are not in a position to interrupt your present career and study salesmanship. Maybe you don't need to. But unless you feel at home with people, it will certainly be wise to take advantage of every opportunity to develop such a feeling. Many techniques presented on subsequent pages are calculated to serve that purpose.

Another advantage came to Lester Collins: He made great strides in improving his ability to express himself effectively. That is important, because practically every method of influencing people involves some form of conversation.

Most of your opportunities to develop friendliness and favorable associations will depend on your ability to talk. So will your chances to win people to your way of thinking and many of your chances for advancement.

The person who progresses most rapidly usually knows his business. He also knows how to work, and he works hard. But the person who can in addition always get his ideas across will surely gain a competitive advantage denied those who lack that ability. As a matter of fact, it is this person who, in the final analysis, really runs things, even if he isn't the boss.

For these reasons much of the following subject matter will concern itself with modes of expression—not just in conversation, persuasion, and the discharge of normal responsibilities, but in speechmaking as well.

Maybe you have never intended to make speeches. If that is so, here is a story that will arouse your interest.

Ward Harris was assistant general manager in an organization employing a hundred people. Because he was quiet and unassuming, his presence went largely unnoticed. And because he had a coveted "brass hat" job, there were many employees who resented his success.

One day a department head walked into Ward Harris' office. "Probably you know," he said, "that Mr. Simpkins is about to retire. He's worked for this company almost fifty years, and everybody likes him. The employees have taken up a collection to buy him a gold watch. Will you make the presentation speech?"

Ward looked surprised. "I'll be glad to do it," he said, "though it does seem a little inappropriate, since I am so new in the organization. Wouldn't it be better to get somebody who has known Mr. Simpkins for a long time?"

"Well," continued the department head, "I've asked everybody else. Everybody is afraid to do it. So I had to ask you."

For a moment Ward reflected on this somewhat uncomplimentary revelation. Then he swallowed his pride and agreed to make the talk.

On the day of the presentation the employees assembled at the foot of a stairway. Ward walked up to the sixth step and made a two-minute speech. Then Mr. Simpkins approached to accept the watch. The two men shook hands, and the performance was greeted with a round of applause.

The next morning Ward Harris made his usual rounds. In one department after another, people stepped forth to congratulate him and comment on his talk. Some of them, Ward reflected, had previously turned their backs when they saw him coming.

"In two minutes," he told me, "I made more friends than in the whole year I had been there."

Many another example could be cited. I am thinking of a young insurance man who was just "one of the crowd" until he started making weekly talks on selling techniques at the regular Saturday morning sales meetings. Within three months he became assistant superintendent—an unheard-of promotion for a man his age who had been with the company less than six months. The promotion came to him because his talks had attracted the attention of his superiors.

Unless you can think on your feet and handle yourself before a group, many opportunities will surely pass you by. That applies to social gatherings as well as business meetings. In every church, lodge, club, or other place where people get together, the ability to speak is an important factor in popularity, progress, and success.

Just as important as thinking on your feet is the ability to arouse people's confidence in you. Confidence is a cumulative quality, seldom won by a single act. As it develops, it gains in strength. No person who values the ability to influence others can afford to neglect the important factor of confidence. Indeed, it pays to use ingenuity in fostering its development.

One of my students was employed as a salesman for a small electrical supply house. We shall call him Howard Page. "Several years ago," he said, "I decided to go into business for myself, but I lacked capital and experience. So I figured out a way of handling a side line that would require only five hundred dollars. Then I went to a bank and arranged for a loan.

"Several weeks before the loan fell due, I had the money with which to repay the bank. But I hung on to it, for I was trying to make an impression.

"At precisely noon on the day my note was due, I walked into that bank and entered the president's office. He commented that I was right on time, and expressed his satisfaction over the chance to help me out.

"'Come back again,' he said.

"During the next three years I negotiated one loan after another, each time in a larger amount. Sometimes I had no use for the money at all, in which case I would simply deposit it in another bank. But always I paid the money back at the exact moment it was due.

"As a result of this experience I learned how to deal with bankers—how to build up my credit. When I was finally ready to start my business, I was in a position to borrow ten times as much as would otherwise have been possible. Even today, my credit is at least five times larger than my assets by themselves would justify."

I asked a bank-president friend whether he would feel sold down the river by a borrower who employed such tactics.

He chuckled. "No," he said, "I wouldn't. Any man who takes such pains in developing his credit is a good risk. You can be sure he will protect it."

Now this matter of generating confidence will be important in many situations. People who believe in your integrity and judgment will turn to you for decisions. That will

automatically have the effect of elevating you to higher authority.

A young engineer of my acquaintance had an experience that will serve as an illustration. His company had designed a transmission station and furnished the equipment. After everything had been installed, the construction superintendent sent for the young engineer and said, "Everything seems to be in order, but nobody around here has the courage to turn on the power."

"What do you want me to do?" asked my friend.

"Tell us it's O.K."

The young "expert" asked questions. Who had made this decision, that one, and the other? Then he talked with those who had been responsible for the decisions, to make sure that they had understood the engineering problems involved.

"Turn it on!" he said at last.

"But wait a minute," said the construction superintendent. "Who is responsible—you or I?"

My friend smiled. "I am," he said.

So the switch was thrown.

What happened? The equipment started functioning in its normal way.

"What," I asked my friend, "did you actually contribute?"

"Technically," he answered, "nothing at all. I merely satisfied myself that the job had been executed by men who knew their stuff. It would have been physically impossible for me to check over all the details, and besides I would only have been duplicating their work. That would have been pointless, since they were as well qualified as I. All they needed was a leader, somebody to blame if things went wrong. They needed somebody who had the courage they lacked. So about all I did, really, was to look smart and supply the courage."

In every walk of life, people look for a leader to whom they can instinctively turn in a crisis. They rely on the person who has aroused their confidence in his knowledge, his ability, and his judgment.

They look for someone they can trust. This point is so important that it deserves special emphasis.

The word "trust" is used in a moral sense. It seems unnecessary to remark that honesty is the best policy and that it will generate confidence in almost everybody with whom you deal. Unfortunately, that word "everybody" has to be qualified.

Because motives of people are often competitive and contradictory, there will likely be someone who misunderstands your words and actions and reads a flavor of dishonesty into your good intentions. The person who is jealous of you, or the one who has lost out to you in the race for advancement, may do this in complete good faith. But if anybody gets the idea that he can't trust you, correct the trouble. In case you cannot correct it, try to rearrange your life so that you will not have to deal with the person who will not trust you.

By letting the other person decide that he cannot trust you, you inevitably destroy your ability to influence him in a natural way. It will pay you to recognize that situation when it arises.

Closely related to this matter of confidence and trust is another matter, which will also be brought out by illustration.

Many years ago I called on a manufacturing executive to sell him an idea. He looked down his nose at me, but inspected the idea. Though he seemed to like it, he showed impatience with my efforts to lead the conversation into channels calculated to help me sell my services along with the idea, and soon I noticed that he had reached a final decision. At once, he proceeded to put it into effect.

What he did, in brief, was to adopt the idea and dismiss me!

Some time afterward, I had another idea to sell. Remembering that earlier experience, I made up a list of executives whom I knew to be honest. From among them, I selected one whose firm could use the idea I had in mind, along with my services. To him I presented the plans. He referred me to one of his assistants, with instructions to investigate the matter and report back. This time, red carpets were rolled out, cigars were passed, and a good time was had by all. Why? Because my idea was sound and the man was honest. Pick your man wisely and you get leverage.

There are many ways of getting leverage. You can get it on the strength of your own position, or by borrowing on that of another person's. You can get it by obtaining a valuable patent, or by ownership of property that places you in a commanding position, as did the man who bought a hotel merely so he could fire a room clerk whose attitude he disliked. Or you can get it by building up your influence with the other person involved.

To build up your influence with someone, you must find some way of "reaching" him. Often you can reach him through his son or daughter, some other member of his family, or a mutual friend. You can do it through his ego, through his private charities, by adding to his son's collection of stamps, by satisfying his desires or preventing his discomfort, or by any one of a thousand other ways. And if you reach him effectively, you will automatically place yourself in a strategic position to influence him.

This brings us to a realization of two meanings of the word "influence." In its verb form, which is the form most often used in this book, it carries the sense of persuading. As a noun, it denotes the "ability" to persuade by reason of one's position, the accumulation of past efforts, or some other simi-

lar advantage. In other words, you can influence (verb form) another person by use of suitable words or actions, but if you first build up your influence (noun form), you can then use words or actions with greater effect.

All of us have a great deal more influence with some people than with others. Recently an acquaintance of mine set up an advisory service for industry. I overheard two men discussing him in a restaurant.

"What is Bill doing these days?" one of them asked.

"Oh," came the reply, "he's giving advice to executives."

"Advice!" exploded the first. "Who'd take *his* advice?"

"Well," answered the second, "there must be enough who will, because Bill's just bought a new house and car, and he has an expensive-looking office."

The point is that building up influence is at first largely an individual matter. With one person after another, you get into a good strategic position. Among them, regardless of what others may think of you, you get yourself across. Then, if you can, you win the others one at a time. And the farther you go in this direction, the more people there are who will climb on your bandwagon, until you have a full load.

All this, I realize, carries the flavor of "pull," a word which has justly earned some disrepute, though only because it has so often been abused, or because of envy directed at its fortunate possessor. Let's be frank enough to admit that "pull" can get you advantages, and that, if it is earned and justified by your own abilities and performances, it represents a logical tool for getting ahead.

As you take steps to generate people's confidence in you and to improve your influence with them, see to it that your reputation spreads in ever widening circles. Make other people conscious of your presence. Attract their attention, and become widely known.

"Have you ever observed," I was once asked by a psychologist who had devoted many years to the study of the behavior of animals, "that a cat lives its own life in your home, while a dog quickly becomes a member of the family?"

Comparatively speaking, the cat scarcely notices individuals.

If you will consider your own circle of acquaintances, you can pick out several who have never really noticed *you*. Well, ask yourself this: Do you really notice *them*?

Even in the bosom of your own family, among your children, your parents, or your brothers and sisters, or between you and your spouse, there might be a similar lack of cognizance. You are more keenly aware of some than of others. Some are more alive to you than others.

Pick out the ones who ignore you, and get their attention, and also pay attention to those whom you have not yourself been noticing.

In addition to working on individuals, consider the value of a mass approach. Here is an illustration which, at first glance, may not seem to make sense.

Don Ramsey had a new job. He was ambitious and wanted to make good, so he came to work early every morning, stayed late every afternoon, and usually took work home with him to do at night. He was getting results, too.

Don had been brought up to believe that if you tend to your duties faithfully and work harder than anybody else, you inevitably become president of your company. But in practice this didn't seem to work out in his case. Don's boss, who was extremely busy, gave him almost no attention. As far as Don could tell, all his accomplishments went unobserved. He made no impression on the company's top executives. Then he ran into a piece of good fortune.

He had incurred the animosity of one of the company's major executives at a meeting when he had talked out of turn

and made remarks he should never have uttered. How could this work to his advantage?

"There was no use in my going to this man and trying to straighten things out. He was so angry it would have given him apoplexy to see me enter his office, let alone talk to him. So there was nothing I could do except take the licking I deserved. I clenched my teeth and hoped for the best.

"That man went into every front office and told each of the company's officials that I was a complete heel. He explained exactly why. Soon I began to notice that whenever I walked through the main offices, executives would turn their heads and look me over. Once I overheard the remark, 'There goes that young upstart whom Watson is so excited about!'

"Fortunately the executives were a fair-minded group of men. Before taking precipitate action, they decided to look me over. When they started inspecting my work, all my extra effort began paying off. They came to the conclusion that I was a good investment—luckily for me.

"The man whose animosity I had aroused had given me more free advertising among the men who counted most than all my painstaking effort. Suddenly they all knew who I was. They addressed me by name in the elevators and halls. From then on the going was easier. Before long I was able to square myself with the man I had infuriated. Then everybody was happy."

This story has not been told to recommend using a campaign of unfriendliness as a means of gaining favorable recognition. Instead it was chosen to illustrate the great importance of getting noticed, even at the risk of paying some penalty in the process.

As the old Quaker said to his offspring, "Son, get thyself talked about. Get thyself talked about favorably if possible. But get thyself talked about!"

In view of the illustration just given, it is fitting that we now turn our attention to another type of basic human-relations technique—the technique of dealing with trouble. Two aspects of this important technique require discussion at this point. Here is a story selected to bring them out:

Mr. Morgan hired Larry Rowe to handle certain details of dealings with several important company customers. Larry was to be a "trouble shooter," he was told. Mr. Morgan hired Larry because of his reputation for ability to diagnose troubles and get them straightened out. Mr. Morgan kept his new assistant under close observation.

Each day Larry reported on his achievements. He straightened out each bad situation as it arose. Larry was proud of this ability. He began to brag a little, and this got under the boss's skin.

After several weeks Mr. Morgan took Larry out to dinner. At first he talked to Larry like a brother, then more like a father, and finally like a Dutch uncle.

"You've told me you have a genius for correcting trouble. I'll admit that you do. But you have a genius for something else, too. I've been looking into the sources of our troubles with customers, and I've discovered that you are creating more than half of them yourself.

"At first I wondered why you were so much more successful than any other man we've ever had on this job. Then I wondered how it happened that you were handling more problems than any of the others. I made a careful investigation, and I got the answer to both questions.

"Your genius in getting out of a hole springs from long practice. The reason you have had so much practice is that you have a remarkable ability to get yourself into a hole in the first place. You learned your techniques for correcting trouble out of necessity. And let me tell you something else:

The man who will suit me in your job must know how to prevent trouble as well as how to straighten it out."

There you have the two aspects of the technique of dealing with trouble.

Mr. Morgan realized that repairing damage is almost always more difficult and complicated than preventing it. It consumes more time and money, more effort. It occasionally happens that the original friendly condition cannot wholly be restored. So it is important to anticipate dangerous situations and see that they do not develop.

The person who fails to master the art of preventing trouble may be so busy clearing up misunderstandings that he has little or no time to spend in creating favorable associations. But the one who masters it anticipates every personality hurdle and takes it into account in making his plans. Such a person can be relied on to make his way among people.

You now have six basic techniques to add to the two fundamentals presented in Chapter 2. They are: (1) Be "at home" with people. (2) Express yourself effectively. (3) Arouse confidence. (4) Increase your influence with people. (5) Get yourself favorably known. (6) Know how to handle trouble. And don't forget the discussion presented at the start of this chapter: look for some way to base every approach on some universal technique that can be expected to reach everybody, but adapt your technique to the person with whom you are dealing.

## Chapter 4

### *A Program for Self-Improvement*

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, as a young man, was a hard worker. Maybe you never thought of it that way, but a hard worker may disturb his less industrious acquaintances by presenting a contrasting example that makes their natural human laziness more evident. He may reduce their mental ease by arousing in them feelings of guilt.

In addition, Franklin had spectacular ability to do the unusual. That ability often aroused jealousy, because there are a good many ineffective people who interpret somebody else's success as a personal affront. Such people feel most effective when there is nobody around to establish a high standard of accomplishment. Instead of working to equal the high standard, they defend themselves by picking flaws in the person who does.

The combination of industry and success—two basically desirable qualities—assured Franklin the disfavor of some people who knew him. But Franklin also had a third quality that invited trouble. He was tactless—which made his first two disadvantages considerably more serious.

You can often accept tactlessness from a person who has nothing to be conceited about. But when the tactless person works hard and succeeds well in whatever he attempts, he will attract attention. If you are like a good many people, you are tempted to knock him down—especially if he is usu-

ally right in what he says, as Franklin often was. In conversation, Franklin put his points over with incisive logic. Less logical people were inclined to dispute his statements until they had been proved, and Franklin thus won a good many arguments. In doing so, he lost a good many friends. So he learned to advance his statements more timidly, less dogmatically, and with high regard for the feelings of people who secretly felt inferior and envious.

Franklin mended other faults and improved his relations with people. He did it by working up effective techniques. These he was obliged to devise for himself, because in his day there was hardly a book that dealt adequately with the subject. Thus he became progressively more tactful. His growing discernment led to such improvement in his dealings with people that his industry and success at last became unqualified assets. No longer did they set people against him, as they did when he had invited such trouble. Ultimately his knowledge of diplomacy, together with his great accomplishments in science and politics, gave him such remarkable advantages that he was chosen to represent his government in both England and France. In doing so, he managed some of the most complicated diplomatic missions of his day—he who had once been so tactless. Meanwhile, as printer and publisher, he had done all right for himself in business too.

This thumbnail sketch has been included for two reasons:

1. It is customary for the author of any book dealing with self-improvement to salt and pepper his text with anecdotes from the lives of famous people. Not desiring to be unconventional, I have now complied with that custom. However, Franklin's will be one of the few famous names to grace these pages. Others have been left out not through oversight but partly because famous men are so often in a position to do things that we ordinary members of the human race can hardly expect to do, and partly because any book based on

such illustrations must naturally rely on previously published works as sources for its material. As an author I desire to avoid the limitations of that reliance.

2. The person who intends to make a revolutionary improvement in his ability to influence people had better begin by studying and applying appropriate technique. As a matter of fact, there is only one other thing he *can* do to help himself toward the desired result, and that is to eliminate the errors and negative qualities that are causing him trouble. Franklin did both.

"I loathe people who resort to technique in their dealings with others," said one of my friends. "I resent the whole idea that certain people, with calculated selfish intentions, will take you apart and analyze you and then bend you to their will. It is only a way of gaining unfair advantage. I won't do it, and I want nobody to try it on me!"

I like the man who said that. But I don't agree with him, because I recognize the difference between honest and dishonest technique.

However, I didn't quote my friend merely to disagree with him. He was interpreting technique in terms of scheming, trickery, chicanery, subterfuge, and double dealing. I have no more respect for such devices than my friend has.

There is another interpretation entertained by my friend, about which I agree. It is that the person who consciously and incessantly uses tricky technique convicts himself of doing everything with ulterior motives. You find it difficult to accept his statements at their face value. You never know just how far he can be trusted. In all your dealings with him you are on guard. His is dishonest technique. But honest technique is another matter, and I shall explain what I mean by it.

My dictionary defines technique as "the manner of performance in any art." In other words, it is the way of get-

ting results in any art, and we are talking about the art of dealing with people. We are talking about the right way, as contrasted with the wrong way. And I might add that the word "right" is used in both its moral and its expedient sense.

Let us consider what "right" technique can do for you.

Practically every situation you encounter has come up before. In one way or another, it will come up again. There will be a right way to handle it and a wrong way. By your success or failure you will be judged. Consequently it is useful to have at least one procedure that can be trusted—one that will work out to the advantage of everybody. Such a procedure is a technique. Using it is simply good business.

A technique charts a course of action. It guides your thoughts and your words and makes your performance almost automatic. It eliminates trial and error. It also guarantees reasonably uniform results. Unless it attains these ends, it is simply not a good technique.

A good technique, if you use it for right purposes, is proper. But a tricky technique lays you open to suspicion. How, then, can you be sure that your use of technique will be right and proper?

The answer is very simple. Use technique only for right purposes. At the same time, let it help you to establish right methods of dealing with people. Practice those right methods until you convert them into natural impulses. Keep practicing until your reaction has become instinctive and conditioned, so that you will automatically respond in the right way to recurring situations of the same kind. When satisfactory conditioning has occurred, you can discard conscious technique. But keep remembering that only conscious use of proper technique will ultimately give you that degree of self-mastery in the art of human relations.

Your objective is a conditioned reaction. A conditioned reaction is infinitely better than conscious technique, because

it lets you shed your inhibitions and behave in a natural way, without your being on guard. A properly conditioned reaction automatically keeps you out of trouble. It places you in the position of getting good results without any special effort.

There are three basic sources for learning how to deal with people:

1. *Your own life.* Notice what works and what doesn't, and revise your methods accordingly. You can engage in an intentional program of making experiments that will extend your knowledge of how to deal with others.

2. *Observation of the acts of others.* If you will analyze other people's ways of handling human relations, you can pick up many sound ideas. By not permitting yourself to fall into the errors you see others commit, you can escape many a bitter lesson. Remember that the more you learn from others, the easier it will be to develop ideas of your own.

3. *The findings of experts.* Those who have made a special study of the subject like to explain and justify their techniques perhaps more than anything else. The more you heed their analyses, the easier it will be for you to interpret the observations you make yourself, especially if you are careful to check each mentor's findings against your own judgment.

Don't take anything on faith. Adopt new techniques only when you feel sure you are doing the right thing in a safe way. Within this limitation, the help you get from others can prove valuable.

We acquire the art of dealing with people from our teachers, from our parents and other relatives, and from those who talk over the radio, deliver lectures, furnish entertainment, write books, or simply put over their ideas in private conversation. They teach us both directly and indirectly, although they are not always aware that they are teaching us.

Some of the best ideas, I have found, come out of novels. One of the really significant ideas I picked up in early life came from Charles Dickens, who had one of his characters, an undertaker, point out that no member of his somber profession could be lighthearted about inquiring into the health of his acquaintances, lest he be suspected of speculating on their death. I have never been an undertaker, but many times, in some delicate relationship, this observation has come to my rescue and caused me carefully to inspect the other person's point of view before making a chance remark.

Many of those who have contributed to my own education have been friends of long standing. Others have been strangers. Some of the really important lessons of my life came out of conversations I overheard in public places. I have learned more from my students than from any other source. Next come my associates in business and industry, and there alone I would have to give credit to several thousand people. Those who have taught me have occupied stations high and low. One of the most important lessons they have impressed on me is that some aspect of the art of dealing with people may be learned from every person who lives and breathes.

At the moment, presumably, you are more interested in learning from this book than from any other source, which reminds me of an illustration. Many years ago, when I was teaching public speaking, it seemed expedient to supplement the instruction with training in the art of getting along with people. So I added a lecture on "The Psychology of Persuasion." It was not possible to say much in a sixty-minute lecture, and students clamored for more information. So I looked for a good book on the subject for class use and finally selected "Strategy in Handling People," by Ewing T. Webb and John B. Morgan.

The week following distribution of copies of this book in one of my classes, a young business executive happened to

meet me on the street. "That book," he said, "was the finest I have ever read. I have learned more from it than from all other sources combined. You certainly did me a favor by getting me to read it."

The instructor in me came to the surface, and I asked, "What, precisely, have you done—as a result of reading the book—that you would not otherwise have done?"

He looked surprised. "Well," he said, "up to the present time I have not been able to put any of those ideas to practical use."

Here the teacher complex took complete possession.

"Then," I told him, "up to the present time that book has done you exactly no good."

He looked a bit shocked. But he reacted as I felt sure he would. "I'm certainly glad you made that comment," he said. "You are absolutely right. And I hope that if you ever write a book on the subject, you will put this story in it!"

This brings us to fifteen rules on the technique of learning to apply the subject matter of this book:

1. *Look for techniques you can use.* Select one or two lead ideas to carry around with you wherever you go. Make an effort to apply them as often as possible, because repeated action builds habits. Then pick out another lead idea and give it the same treatment.

2. *Break new ground every day.* Regard every contact as an opportunity to practice. Establish good habits of human relations as an integral part of your daily routine. Let your associates come to expect them of you. Your improved methods will steadily become more and more instinctive.

3. *Experiment with all kinds of techniques.* Stimulate a friendly reaction. Attract favorable attention. Raise somebody's ego. Get an idea across. Change somebody's mind. Overcome opposition. Get cooperation. Occasionally run through the headings in this book to pick up lead ideas, then

go out and apply them. Try a new technique every day. Seek every chance to increase the number of techniques that you can handle ably.

4. *Hedge against possible failure.* No matter how valuable any one technique is, it can be misapplied or used on the wrong person. So before deciding on the use of a technique, take care to determine how much is at stake in case of failure. If you cannot lose, proceed and see what happens. Perhaps you will put your idea across. But do not make experiments on anybody who is in a position to discomfort you or damage your cause. Should your effort turn out to be unsuccessful, protect yourself by giving that person no more attention than you feel certain will prove effective.

5. *Seek to stimulate definite reactions.* Make frequent efforts to say and do things calculated to accomplish a pre-determined result. Reason out in advance both the desired outcome and the technique for achieving it. Do this under all kinds of circumstances. Get the habit of doing it. As a consequence, you will rapidly improve your ability to gain positive results in dealing with people.

6. *Learn to plan for success.* Determine the response you desire, then run through several seemingly practicable procedures in your mind. Select the one that you think would be most effective. Use it, and observe results. Be guided by the outcome in planning other procedures.

7. *Judge the outcome in advance.* Get the habit of anticipating reactions to what you are going to say. With a little experience, you will find it surprisingly easy to make excellent advance judgments. As a result you will often modify an approach and improve its chances of success. You will also learn when it is safe to proceed.

8. *Notice how each technique works out.* Estimate the extent of your success or failure by watching the expression on the other person's face, by noticing his remarks, by observing

his general response. Become sensitive to the little telltale signs that give him away regardless of what he says. They will teach you valuable lessons in the choice and application of techniques.

9. *Carefully observe your mistakes.* Admit mistakes frankly to yourself, and you will be more likely to do something constructive about them. This is not always easy, for most of us consistently hide our shortcomings from ourselves. We build our egos by making a subconscious pretense of perfection. But habitual attempts to do this blind us to precisely that knowledge which is essential to good human relations.

10. *Analyze the causes of your failure.* When some technique fails to work out as expected, do not shrug your shoulders and charge it off on the books. Look into the reasons. Find out where you were wrong. If you make these analyses, you will have unpleasant surprises less often, and your plans will work out more frequently.

11. *See what you might have done instead.* Look for another technique—one that would have served you well if only you had thought of it. Or better yet, look for one that you can still use to make a recovery.

12. *Don't shy away from difficult people.* No matter how hard you try to impress people, a certain percentage of them will instinctively dislike you and discount your ability. Do not assume that you cannot handle them. They confront you with your greatest challenge, and consequently your greatest opportunity for growth.

13. *Act the part you want to play.* However difficult it may seem at first, throw yourself into the part. What begins as an intentional pose can be converted into a natural attitude. Some of your acting will doubtless be awkward, and possibly you will not put yourself across every time. But

each success will better equip you for future growth. All it takes is persistent effort.

14. *Don't step too far out of character.* Do only that which seems reasonably natural to you. Thus you will diminish your self-consciousness and the appearance of artificiality. But avoid the habit of evading too many new ideas because of an assumption that they will not fit in with your personality. You can really give your personality greater scope, if you try.

15. *Make notes on your accomplishments.* Build a file recording your successes and failures. The mere act of writing them up will strengthen your ability. Study them occasionally. They will disclose weaknesses calling for extraordinary treatment as well as patterns of success.

The procedures described in these fifteen rules, practiced over a period of time, can transform your whole personality as it is seen by others. But who are the people on whom you can practice them?

Suppose you draw up a list of the ten people who mean most to your welfare and happiness. Make sure it includes associates, personal friends, and members of your family. Add one or two casual acquaintances.

Get someone on your list who seems to be a problem and someone with whom you have strained relations. Add a few names of people who have seldom noticed you, who have shown indifference to you, or who have resisted your efforts toward a cooperative footing.

Keep that list before you as you read this book. Constantly search out ideas and techniques that can be used to improve your relations with the persons named on it. And here I cannot resist the temptation to put in a plug for those who live with you.

To the average well-adjusted man, home is more than just a place to hang his hat. But to some men, home provides only an environment in which to work off gourches, often on those

few persons who are, or should be, most dear to them. It would probably affect their happiness less adversely if they spoke harshly to one of their associates in the office or shop rather than to a member of the family. If charity begins at home, so does the development of one's ability to gain friends and improve one's relations in the outside world.

So begin practicing these fifteen rules on members of your family. Let them know you are doing it, and in all likelihood they will be sympathetic. In that way you have little to lose if your technique fails, and much to win if it succeeds.

Because relatives are just like other human beings after all, the following technique will wonderfully improve your relations with them: Treat each member of your family just as you would treat an acquaintance whose friendship you wish to earn—one whom you are anxious to please and impress—and there will be an astonishing improvement in your home life.

Working on the people closest to you will prove highly beneficial, and this brings us to another of the fundamental considerations involved in dealing with people: Your own behavior has more to do with the treatment you receive from others than any other single factor, and your behavior is controlled largely by habit. Thus habit also largely controls your personality.

When "out in company," if you are like most people, you naturally attempt to lay your bad habits aside and show yourself to advantage. At home, you relax—and you sometimes let your bad habits take over. Consequently you are then most vulnerable to trouble. So home is the place to be on guard. Unless your habits of action and reaction, as practiced at home, are as well groomed as your appearance, your normal responses in the outside world can cause misunderstandings and occasionally create animosity.

There are two troubles with bad habits: (1) They cause automatic performances that tend to perpetuate whatever faults you possess, and they get people accustomed to expecting you to behave in a certain way. (2) Because the people you know best will alter their judgment of you only gradually, a considerable accumulation of new evidence is necessary before changes in your conduct affect their opinion of you. Negative habits will therefore always be a brake on your improvement.

The importance of beginning a course of action close to home is obvious. From that as a vantage point, let us work outward. The people you work with every day at the plant or office, no matter how well you know them, should be given the same careful consideration as should be given those with whom you live at home. So should your more casual acquaintances. So should everybody else—even those whom you may meet only once in your life. They should all get the same considerate treatment if you want to become a genuine, honest-to-goodness, dyed-in-the-wool past master in the art of getting along with people.

I realize that I am recommending a program that will seem unfair to you at times. Often you will bewail the fact that your efforts to get along with people seem to be one-sided. You will find yourself giving ground, making sacrifices, taking the initiative in stimulating friendliness. To some extent, you will find that people take advantage of you. They will not always treat you with the same consideration you show them. That, it may console you to realize, will lead to their loss more than to your own.

But there is a vastly more important reason, far more significant to you, for adopting any such far-reaching attitude. I shall present it by indirection.

In these books you will find a complete philosophic pattern for good human relations. It consists of many formulas.

Together they constitute one comprehensive formula, which, if consistently applied, will guarantee excellent results—especially if applied on a grand scale.

Do not merely dust off and use these formulas when you want something, or when you have some special ulterior purpose. Instead, live by them. Use them in dealing with people—with those you like and those you don't like; with those you envy and those who envy you; even with those who try to take advantage of you; in fact, with everybody. Use them under all circumstances—when you feel well and when you don't, when you are driving your car or traveling on a public conveyance, when you are trying to accomplish a particular purpose, when you are impatient, when you have been let down, when you feel frustrated, when you are tired or hungry, or when you are disgusted with the human race. Use them universally with friends, relatives, rivals, enemies, strangers, competitors. Use them with all people.

That is a rather big order. To be justified, it must be based on sound reasoning. It is.

No matter how effective are the formulas that you learn to apply, none can contain enough magic to accomplish your purpose, if you intersperse them with negative action and contradictory performance. The drag of working against yourself a part of the time will retard your progress and interfere with the development of sound and reliable habits. If you really want to get along with people, you cannot afford to be less than wholeheartedly devoted to those formulas that you have found efficacious.

Analyze your habits of reacting to the conversation of others, to their appearance, to their positions and achievements, to their possessions and ambitions, to their motives, and to anything else that may influence you in their presence. Also find out what most often causes you to behave negatively, and do something about that.

Help yourself along by doing these three things: (1) Train yourself to scotch questionable impulses before you express them. (2) Examine the probable consequence of your remark or act. (3) Replace all questionable impulses with acceptable ones. Gradually you will gain the advantage of sound instinctive reactions.

It now seems wise to summarize those fundamentals of good human relations that we have thus far discussed. So here they are:

1. It is possible to influence people favorably by the exercise of native faculties, but it is also possible to improve your faculties by study and effort, even to the extent of overcoming natural weaknesses and serious obstacles caused by the vicissitudes of life.

2. The ability to get along with people and influence their decisions will have a marked bearing on your business and social success, as well as on your happiness. Perhaps more people fail from lack of such ability than for any other cause, but the person who can win friendliness on all sides is almost sure to find that opportunities unfold before him with gratifying frequency.

3. In the long-term sense, everybody can win, simply because there are more than enough attractive opportunities to go round. By your own success, you necessarily contribute to that of others.

4. At least to a limited extent, everybody is an expert in the art of influencing people. But everyone has his blind spots, and consequently his failures. Wisdom begins on recognition of this fact.

5. You can learn by observing how well others influence people, by making deliberative experiments, and by studying the underlying principles of techniques.

6. There are only three fundamental ways of influencing people. They are coercion, fear, and desire. But you will

usually get best results by stimulating desire in the direction of your objective.

7. You can practically always improve your ability to influence the other person by engaging his good feelings toward you.

8. There are situations demanding specialized techniques, but before applying one of them, make sure that a universal procedure, geared to some universal motive, cannot be applied. Specialized techniques must be carefully adapted to the other person's individuality.

9. It will be easiest to get good results if you feel "at home" with people, and it will probably pay you to take extraordinary steps toward creating this feeling.

10. Since most contacts are made through the medium of speech, you will find it wise to develop your ability to express yourself effectively.

11. It is possible to induce in others the habit of going along with you and your ideas. One of the easiest ways of doing this is to cultivate their confidence.

12. Build your influence, your leverage, even your "pull," with as many people as you can, but always use right methods.

13. The more people there are who know you, the more often you will get consideration when opportunities arise. So get yourself widely and favorably known.

14. It is easier to prevent trouble than to correct it. Get the habit of looking ahead to foresee and avoid possible dangerous situations.

15. The study and practice of specific techniques will help you to learn and understand the art of dealing with people. Persistent effort will enable you to condition your reactions and make excellent performance instinctive.

16. Always apply the rules, given earlier in this chapter, on procedures in learning the art of dealing with people.

Here the rules are epitomized: Look for techniques you can use. Break new ground every day. Experiment with all kinds of techniques. Hedge against possible failure. Seek to stimulate definite reactions. Learn to plan for success. Judge the outcome in advance. Notice how each technique works out. Carefully observe your mistakes. Analyze the causes of your failure. See what you might have done instead. Don't shy away from difficult people. Act the part you want to play. Don't step too far out of character. Make notes on your accomplishments.

17. Lose no opportunity to eliminate bad habits and supplant them with good ones. Improve your natural reactions, especially by practicing on the people closest to you.

There remains one great fundamental that has not yet been discussed:

Remember that winning people is primarily an emotional problem. This problem will be discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter 5

### *Creating Helpful Emotional Forces*

“**E**VERYBODY has it in for me,” said Jesse Crawford. “People like to embarrass me. If I make one little mistake, they pounce on it like so many ghouls. I have to spend so much time protecting and defending myself, it’s a wonder I ever get any work done.”

For the next thirty minutes I listened to a dissertation on unfriendliness and lack of cooperation. Throughout his outpourings, Jesse repeatedly referred to his own shining but unappreciated virtues and bewailed the shortcomings of his associates. Not one good word did he have for anybody except himself.

“It’s just that they don’t like me,” he concluded, “so they pick flaws in everything I do. But I don’t let them get anything on me. I can’t afford to. My stomach ulcers are bad enough as it is.”

I had a professional assignment to do something about Jesse.

As one of a dozen executives in the company that employed him, Jesse had important responsibilities. He knew his business and did a good job. That I had been told on unimpeachable authority. He was clearly well suited to his job, and I found him exceptionally intelligent. There was only one thing seriously wrong with him: he couldn’t get along with people.

One way or another, during the ensuing three weeks, mostly through indirect conversations, a definite picture took shape. It showed Jesse as he appeared to his associates, and seldom have I seen such universal agreement regarding any human being.

Here is what his associates said.

First man: "Jesse is known as the 'ice water' department. He can always prove why anything won't work. He has kind words only for his own ideas, and one of his favorite expressions is 'I told you so.' He's a good man, but he certainly is hard to understand. I think he has an inferiority complex."

Second man: "Jesse is a chronic griper. Nothing suits him. During every personal contact he tries to elevate himself by tearing down the other fellow. He'll tell you what's wrong with everybody else around the place except himself. It doesn't take the average person very long to figure out that he is the victim of similar disparaging remarks, when he isn't on the scene to defend himself. People *are* unfair to Jesse, but he sure does ask for it!"

Third man: "Jesse is a pessimist and a prophet of gloom. He never sees any silver lining in the clouds of life. He is always making depressing predictions. He spreads the doctrine that the world is going to the dogs. He wears a sour mood to prove his recognition of the world's depravity. Most of his trouble is of his own making."

Fourth man: "Jesse constantly searches for faults to criticize and condemn in others. Because he does, he usually finds them. Even when he doesn't, he reacts cynically to every situation he encounters. He is always generating destructive emotions, in himself and others. Because of these things, his presence is resented."

Fifth man: "Jesse always has to have more than his share of the credit for everything that happens around here. He is always bolstering his own good opinion of himself, and

trying to prove that opinion. When he makes a mistake, he tries to show that it would have been impossible for anyone else to do better. When something turns out better than he expected, even if it was by sheer accident and he knows it, Jesse concocts some cock-and-bull story offering proof that only his astuteness and foresight were responsible. To avoid blame and gain credit, he will resort to almost any extreme. And anybody who takes the wind out of his sails had better duck!"

Thus Jesse's associates expressed themselves about what they didn't like about him. But all of them agreed that he also had virtues. He was industrious, competent, and reliable. He knew his job. With all his faults, he was a good man to have around. But what a relief if he could overcome them!

The men who were most interested in Jesse got together to consider his problem. They agreed it was emotional in nature, and that he was trapped by an habitual state of mind that had led him into a vicious circle. Because he was disagreeable, his associates tended to retaliate in kind, and because they retaliated, they gave him reason for remaining disagreeable. Something needed to be done to break this thing up.

These men agreed that they were themselves partly responsible for Jesse's state of mind. Just as he had gained the habit of griping, they had gained the habit of accepting it. Instead of expressing surprise and attempting to counteract his negative behavior, they had moved over and made room for it. They decided to do that no longer. They developed a program calculated to reverse the trend.

They agreed to jolly and cajole Jesse into a better frame of mind. They would treat him pleasantly, and get across the idea that they expected the same treatment from him. When he was pleasant, they would reward him. When he

was disagreeable, they would cite some homely truth pertinent to the situation. They would surround him with influence and see whether they could lead him in the right direction. Here are some examples of comments they agreed on making to him:

"Don't let people stir up your resentment. When they do, control your words and acts regardless of your feelings."

"Don't take yourself too seriously. Don't be self-centered. Don't pity yourself. Instead, turn your attention to other people. Consider their problems and troubles rather than your own."

"Get that chip off your shoulder. It only makes you say and do things people resent."

"Don't try to show your superiority. Never let yourself feel jealous of another person's achievements or the credit he receives for them—even when unearned."

"Stop talking about people behind their backs. If you must discuss them, build them up."

"Why not try to please the people you work with? Take the attitude that they are your customers, to whom you are selling your ideas, your enthusiasms, your personality. You have plenty of good points, so you'll probably succeed."

What do you suppose happened? What would happen to you if you were subjected to such treatment? Undoubtedly you would modify your habits. That is precisely what Jesse did, and the vicious circle was broken.

Jesse no longer indulged his natural tendency toward criticism and backbiting. Instead, he tried to please his associates. And each time he got his reward. They saw to that. Because he got better reactions, he felt better, and it was easier to go on from there. He discovered that an improved attitude brought him success in dealing with people.

Your own problem may be simpler than Jesse's. But no one can afford to let his mind dwell on negative emotions.

Fear, anger, hate, envy, and jealousy induce aggressiveness and perpetual self-defense. They are negative personality traits. They adversely affect one's dealings with people.

Getting along with others is primarily an emotional problem. Intelligence determines what you are capable of doing, but emotion determines whether you will do it, for emotion is always the driving force. It has always seemed to me that the essential purposes of intelligence are to stimulate, guide, control, and satisfy emotional urges. Your intelligence can direct the emotional urges of other people almost as easily as it can direct your own. And that, in a nutshell, constitutes the procedure of influencing people.

What this means is that the art of influencing people rests on ability to direct and reorient the contradictory desires and emotions of other people by providing stimuli.

In providing stimuli that will convert other people's desires and emotions into helpful driving forces, there are two basic all-inclusive concepts to be kept clearly in mind. I shall state them in very specific terms:

1. Friendliness results from producing a favorable balance between attractions and repulsions, and between the pleasures and irritations set up by your presence and your personality. In other words, it results from a favorable balance between positive and negative emotional forces. Doubtless there are some repulsions and irritations in almost every human relationship, but the vital task is to reduce them. Doubtless there are some attractions and pleasures in every association (potentially at least) and the vital task is to increase them. When the resultant of these contradictory emotional forces is heavily in your favor, the other fellow will be your friend. Because he is your friend he will try to suit you. He will try to avoid displeasing you. He will also be susceptible to any proper influence and persuasion that you provide.

The precepts in the foregoing paragraph are clear. In each of your personal associations, systematically search out and reduce the negative emotional forces that irritate the other fellow and drive him away. At the same time, systematically search out and strengthen the positive emotional forces that please him and draw him close. Succeeding chapters will present many suggestions for doing both. And now we come to the second basic concept. It is so important that, for clarity, I shall try to cast it in the same mold as what I have just said.

2. Cooperation results from friendliness, but it also results from exerting effective influence and persuasion. No matter what techniques you use to get them across, influence and persuasion are effective when they produce a favorable balance between the other fellow's approval and his opposition. They are effective when they produce a favorable balance between his incentives and his resistance. In other words, as in the case of friendliness, they are effective when you create a favorable balance between his positive and negative emotional forces. Doubtless there is some opposition and resistance to almost all influence and persuasion, but the vital task is to reduce it. Doubtless there is some approval and incentive in all proper influence and persuasion (potentially at least) and the vital task is to increase it. When the resultant of these contradictory emotional forces is heavily in your favor, the other fellow will cooperate. If he is your friend, he will cooperate in a way that will please you and not displease you. But your very act of persuading him, if you produce a favorable balance of emotional forces, will also increase his friendliness. Thus it is seen that friendliness and cooperation go hand in hand, each helping the other along.

The precepts in that paragraph are also clear. In all your efforts to get the other fellow to do what you want him to do, systematically search out and reduce the elements of his op-

position and resistance. At the same time, systematically search out and strengthen the elements of his approval and incentive. Succeeding chapters and volumes will present a wide variety of specific methods for doing both. But remember that what you are dealing with is, in any of these cases, essentially an emotional problem.

There are two kinds of emotion: negative and positive. Each of these falls into two classes: yours and the other person's. These are the factors with which you must deal. Your success or failure will depend on how well you handle them.

Negative emotions can produce unfortunate results. They can change your body chemistry and poison your physical and emotional systems. Carried too far, they can temporarily undermine and destroy your judgment. Also, by altering your behavior they can produce manifest personality changes. They can repel the people you meet.

Do not fool yourself. Negative emotions can never fully be concealed. Though difficult to recognize and describe, they are somehow apparent to others. You will always be judged at least partly by those emotions and thoughts that you think you have successfully hidden. Do not allow these foes of attractiveness and stability to find prolonged dwelling among your thoughts.

Maybe you aren't surrounded by associates who will get you back on the track, as Jesse's did. But here is something else you can do:

"Looking on the bright side of life," said one of my students, "is a tendency easy to acquire. It consists in choosing the things you will think about. Search out good news rather than bad. Let your mind dwell on your accomplishments and good fortunes instead of on bitter recollections of your mistakes and failures. Anticipate agreeable events—the unfortunate kind may never occur, anyhow. Be absorbed with uplifting ideas. Stimulate constructive feelings of all kinds.

"Let your random thoughts turn to your friends instead of your enemies, to your blessings more often than your sorrows, to your good luck rather than your bad luck.

"Get into environments tending to improve your emotions. Cultivate people who feed your ego enough to give you a slightly favorable balance against the world as a whole. Stay away from people who increase your burdens while offering no compensating advantages. Learn to recognize situations that cause you distress and avoid them. By letting yourself be down half the time, you may have to spend the other half repairing the damage."

It becomes evident that there are two general sources of negative emotions. The first springs from disagreeable situations. Something goes wrong, or you are afraid that something will go wrong. Accidents, illness, or the frustrations of unsatisfied ambitions fall into this category. The second source springs from dealing with people who rub you the wrong way. Lack of diplomacy, unfair competition, bickerings and conflict, or refusal to cooperate belong in this category.

There are three things that can be done about sources of negative emotions: (1) Understand the trouble. (2) If possible, correct it. (3) When you are powerless to change matters, get out from under by focusing your attention on something else.

Since this book deals with human relations, the negative emotions that involve situations are touched on only in so far as they influence dealings with people. But the negative emotions that involve troubles with people call for careful discussion. They produce an emotional imbalance that sets up a chain reaction. The person who makes you angry, for example, automatically impels you to say something quite likely to make him angry too. Like the ripples that circle

out when a stone is thrown on the peaceful surface of a pond, anger spreads and spreads.

Your own emotions and the emotions of the other person are inextricably intertwined. Emotional trouble between people starts when you say or do something the other person resents; when he says or does something you resent; when something about your attitude or appearance arouses his ill feeling; when something about *his* attitude or appearance arouses *your* ill feeling. The important factor here is the influence that your emotions and the other person's exert reciprocally.

A large book could be written on the subject of the interplay of emotions between people, but only the following fundamental points need be made here:

Your emotions will influence the other person's, and his will influence yours. Usually the one who has the stronger emotion will tend to exert the greater influence. Usually, also, the emotion that has been communicated from one person to another will tend to retain its original character and remain the same general kind of emotion. But—and this is important—it may be given a new direction.

Here is the meaning of these fundamentals when they are translated into the realities of life:

Your friends will share in your griefs and your joys if you will let them. But you can communicate your emotions more easily if the other person participates in them. It will be easier for him to feel elation over your good fortune if he has a share in it, and by the same token he will be more sympathetic with your tribulations if he is himself affected by them. Frequently people become friends, for example, as soon as they discover that they have the same enemies. However, if your emotion irritates the other person, his unsympathetic reaction will be aimed against you.

Strong favorable and sympathetic emotions are worth cultivating because they make for success in cooperative action, while unfavorable emotions should almost always be avoided because they are capable of producing explosive consequences.

A useful rule is to make yourself impervious to irritations.

Jim Carson had this knack. He had every reason to be irritated, but you wouldn't have known it from the expression on his face, and certainly not from anything he said or did.

Jim had been brought up in a business that his father had founded. During school and college days, Jim had been studious. Immediately after graduating *cum laude*, Jim began to work in the family business—on the lowest rung of the ladder. He got his hands dirty. Men in the plant respected him.

He worked in every department of the company. He learned to operate the machinery. He gained experience in every supervisory capacity, and then transferred to selling. He earned a reputation with the important customers, and when the sales manager retired, Jim stepped in to fill that vacancy. Presently he trained another man to take over the sales department, and then he devoted himself to increasing his knowledge of higher management.

Then his father died suddenly, and responsibility for operation of the company fell on Jim's shoulders. Before inheritance taxes could be paid, some of the father's stock had to be sold. When the estate was settled, Jim found that he and two other active stockholders had almost equal amounts of stock. The three, together, controlled the company. But the shares of any two of them were less than was needed for control, because the rest of the stock was held in small amounts by a number of people.

To gain control at Jim's expense, his two associates began a whispering campaign against him. To key men in the organization, they held out bright prospects of larger responsibilities and more pay. Against Jim, this group formed a solid wall.

Many of his projects came to a halt, and he found himself blocked at almost every turn. Always he was confronted with backbiting and recriminations.

Through all this opposition, Jim kept his head. He remained impervious to annoyance and irritation. He made wise decisions and attracted support. One by one, the key men shifted their allegiance from his two associates to him. When the issue was finally decided at a stockholders' meeting, Jim was vindicated. He became president. Sheepishly the opposing ringleaders put their tails between their legs. They expected to get fired.

"Now that the battle is over," said one of them to Jim, "I hope we can still work together."

"Why not?" asked Jim.

"Well, I should think you would be very much irritated by the things we did."

Jim smiled.

"No," he said, "I don't get irritated easily."

Later he said to me, "If I had let myself get excited, I would have played right into their hands. In addition to making wrong decisions, I would have driven support over to their side. It might have afforded me satisfaction to give them a piece of my mind, but I knew I would need all the pieces myself. Besides, those men were valuable, and I wanted to keep them."

This story has been told to show the advantage that comes to the person who can banish his feelings of resentment.

In applying this lesson, make a direct effort to reduce your sensitiveness to troubles. Train yourself to accept disagree-

able facts without excitement. Give them only such attention as they actually deserve. If possible, dismiss them with a shrug. Divert your attention to something else. By thus reacting sanely, you train yourself to accept frustrations with minimum disturbance. Consistent practice will gradually get you to a point where your blood pressure will no longer register violent rises.

Learning to protect yourself against negative feelings may prove difficult, but a religious or philosophical faith will help you do it. There is also help to be had from the well-known psychological principle that a negative emotion can be supplanted by a positive one. The way to begin is to act as though you already felt the desired emotion. However you manage it, develop your courage, your freedom from fear, and your sense of being equal to the tasks you face. Fortify yourself with inner peace. Do this persistently enough over a period of time, and you will make sweeping changes in your whole emotional outlook. In effect, you will alter your personality, for new habits of thought and action will spring up to replace the old.

Another reason why I have presented this story about Jim Carson is that it serves to introduce an additional useful rule: Do not transmit negative emotions to others.

Despite your good resolutions, you may occasionally find it impossible to control your resentment. But you can at least control the manner in which you express that resentment.

By putting your emotions into words, you give them free rein. By releasing their destructive forces, you cause additional excitement in yourself. Consequently your blood pressure goes up and up. There is an easy way to avoid this: Refrain from speaking or acting on a sudden impulse. Wait until you cool off. Then your words and behavior may be

quite different. After a period of practice, you may be surprised at the growth in your self-control.

By controlling yourself, you will avoid stirring up anyone else who may be involved. You will, as Jim Carson did, maintain your equilibrium and deny the opposition a supply of free weapons.

Do not, however, lose sight of the fact that an emotional outburst, even though you contain it within yourself, represents a powerful force. Under stress your system suddenly releases tremendous energies that must be used up somehow. Merely to exercise conversational self-restraint is not enough. Give these energies work to perform.

Almost invariably you can find some entirely harmless and useful activity that will quickly absorb the heat of your emotions. You can take a few minutes out for vigorous physical exercise. You can plunge into some job that demands your highest energies. You can develop some project that will improve your business. Regardless of the source of your emotional drive, remember that it will provide power to accomplish constructive results. It is how you employ it, rather than how you obtain it, that really counts. So get exhilaration out of your excitement. Don't let a fine supply of energy go to waste.

But sometimes such admirable self-restraint is impossible to attain. What should you do then? Well, it has often been said that when you receive a letter that arouses your anger, a good trick is to answer it right away. This permits draining off your surplus emotions. But don't mail that letter. Stick it in a drawer for three days, and then write the one you are actually going to send.

You can use such strategy even in situations involving no correspondence. Instead of venting your spleen on an antagonist, go off by yourself. Get out pencil and paper, and write out what you think of him. Keep on working away at

this long enough, and you will get the desired result. Besides, in the process you are likely to accumulate many useful ideas. You may find yourself developing a plan of action that will permit correction of the trouble, without any emotional blowup at all.

Despite your best efforts to control both your emotions and your words, there may be occasions when you fail. If this happens, you will almost inevitably have to pay some price. You may have to face the other person's animosity, along with whatever damage he can do you. He may give you plenty of reason for serious concern. And here is one of the situations in which complete intellectual honesty on your part may prove difficult to maintain, because if you have aroused his negative emotions, it is a safe bet that you have destroyed much of your ability to influence him. Moreover, as his excitement mounts, you can expect him to treat you more and more unfairly whenever he gets a chance. You will blame him for this, but he won't blame himself. You won't be justified in holding it against him, either, because, having been affronted, he will be incapable of judging whether he is fair or not. When you give the other person cause to resent your behavior, he will also give you cause to resent his behavior.

But even without visible provocation you may become the victim of a "raw deal." When this happens, how should you react?

After you have somehow been irritated beyond endurance, it is only natural to feel a profound sense of unfriendliness toward the person who caused your discomfort. You want to repay him in the same coin. It may give you a great deal of personal satisfaction to plot the downfall of someone who has caused you trouble, but you will almost certainly hurt yourself in the process.

This brings us to the final rule in respect to negative emotions: Work off your grudges without seeking revenge.

At first glance that might seem like a bitter pill to swallow. But it takes a hundred times more vitality to hold a grudge than it does to forget it, and you simply cannot afford the emotional friction that results from holding it. Besides, by planning and carrying out a program of unfriendliness, and by gloating over its successful outcome, you stir up emotional trouble for yourself.

Never hope or plan for somebody else's bad luck, not even privately. Instead of seeking revenge, resist feelings of unfriendliness. If someone has damaged you, console yourself with the realization that life has an automatic tendency to even out injustices. Let the other person get away with minor transgressions, and don't you be the judge of him. Just protect yourself as well as you can from actual injury, and once a matter is finished let it rest.

Getting rid of your grudges may not be easy. If you have a private assortment of pet hates, whether you admit it or not, it is probably because you enjoy them. Even though they make you feel uncomfortable, your mind returns to dwell on them again and again. But there is a better use for such energy.

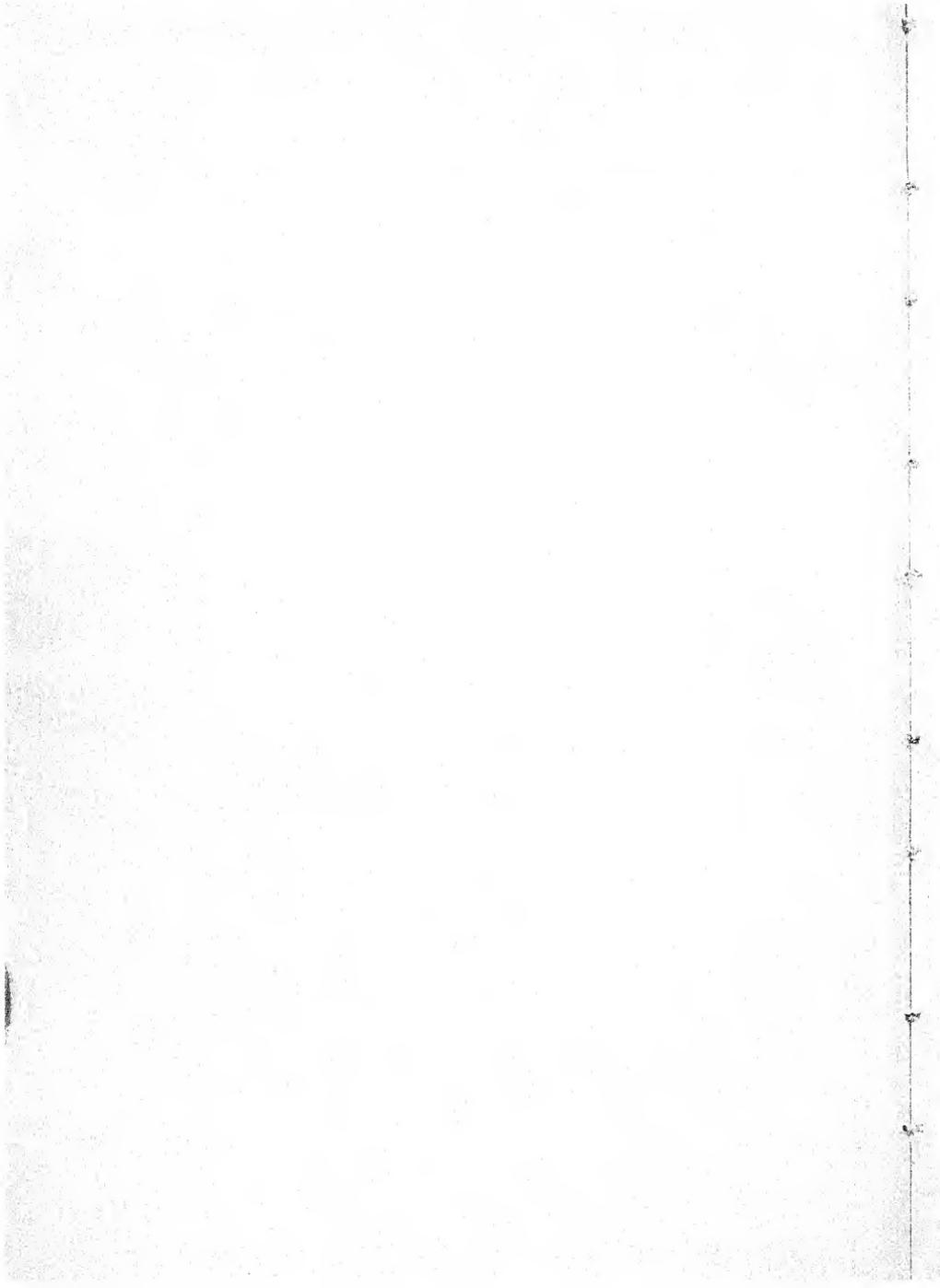
If you really have an enemy who is out to "get" you, it is possible that you can use him as an emotional power plant. That's what Jim Carson did.

"All during the time those fellows were working against me," he told me, "I tried to keep my temper under control. Never once, in conversation with them, did I raise my voice. I think I successfully concealed all traces of anger. But I felt it, nevertheless. And I used it as a source of power for competing with them more effectively.

"Each evening, after a day's accumulation of insults, I would plan the next few steps of my strategy. The madder I

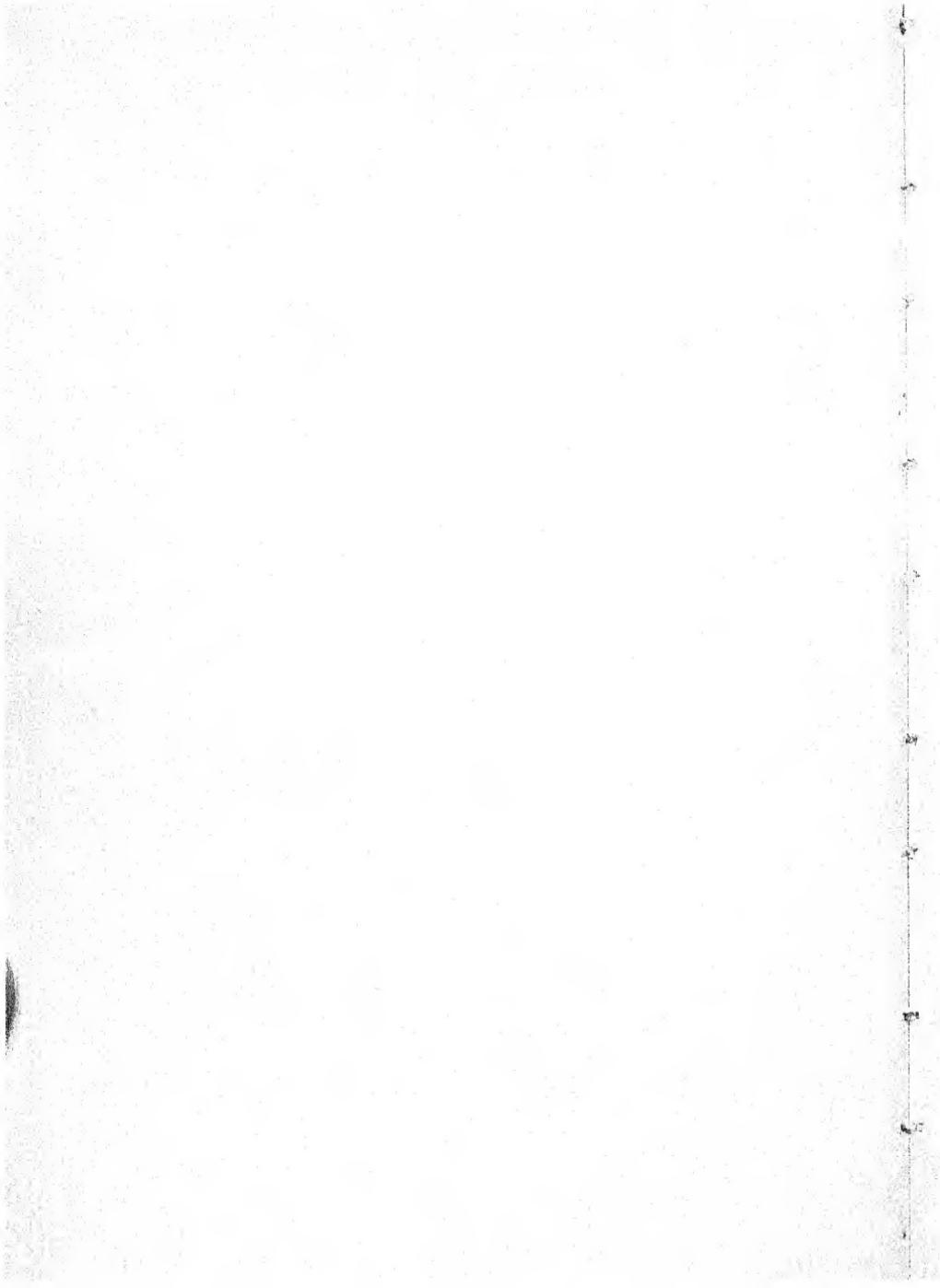
was, the more good ideas I produced. By holding my tongue at crucial times, I avoided an open break. Thus I preserved my ability to work with those men after the battle was over. Because they didn't hold their tongues, they gave me an advantage. But the really strategic advantage they gave me came from the fact that every time my resolution weakened they piled on more fuel. They don't know it, even yet, but their stoking of my emotional power plant was responsible for my singleness of purpose, which led to their ultimate defeat. Some day I expect to thank them."

People never have trouble getting along with one another except when their negative emotions are aroused—and are negatively employed. So if you would develop the magic touch in getting along with people, you must see to it that your emotional house is in order.



## *Part II—Make Everybody Like You*

6. INVITING OTHERS' FRIENDSHIP
7. TAKING PART IN AN INTRODUCTION
8. WINNING FRIENDS AT FIRST SIGHT
9. ATTRACTING FAVORABLE ATTENTION
10. DOING THINGS PEOPLE APPRECIATE
11. STIMULATING PERSONAL INTEREST
12. RAISING OTHER PEOPLE'S EGOS



## Chapter 6

### *Inviting Others' Friendship*

**S**EVEN-YEAR-OLD Teddy Dalton had just started second grade. The boys and girls were friendly, so he was happy. Then his parents moved to a new house. In the new neighborhood, the children were not friendly.

Teddy stayed out of trouble mostly by running away from fights. Even Spike Callahan couldn't catch him, and this infuriated Spike. So one afternoon, after careful scheming, Spike managed to be hidden behind a tree when Teddy passed on his way home from school. He then stepped out to give the newcomer a walloping.

Teddy stood there and took it. He never once fought back. He hadn't learned how to.

Presently Spike stopped pummeling him, stood off to enjoy his handiwork, and jeered, "You don't even fight back!"

Through his tears, Teddy said, "But I don't *want* to hit you."

"He doesn't want to hit me!" mocked Spike. Then, in derision, "Why not?"

Through Teddy's panic came a flash of inspiration. "Because," he answered, "I like you!" That was the end of the fight.

From that day on, nobody dared threaten Teddy. Any one who did, had to answer to Spike.

Now Teddy, who after all was only a second grader, had never read any book on the subject of dealing with people. Nor had he ever heard the word "technique." But his instinctive reaction to abuse was such that he automatically resorted to a human-relations technique so fundamental and effective that it will serve as a key for this chapter.

Develop a liking for people. Exert yourself to be friendly. Put your friendliness on display. Assume that other people will reciprocate. In all your dealings, create a friendly atmosphere. Do this and you will make it difficult or impossible for others to display animosity toward you.

Teddy Dalton was lucky to have learned this lesson early in life. Once realizing its truth, he remembered to put it to use. Let us consider a later experience in which he used his knowledge well.

When Teddy was eleven years old, his teacher caught him one day in an act of misbehavior.

"Theodore!" she said. "Stand up!"

He did. A lot of things ran through his mind. Instead of feeling guilty, he felt trapped.

He had seen one of his schoolmates stuff a sheet of paper into his mouth and chew it up. Fascinated, he had watched while his friend put the resulting wad of pulp on the end of his ruler, which he used as a catapult to propel the soggy projectile to the ceiling, where it stuck.

Boys, like monkeys, are imitators, and Teddy was no exception. The mechanics of this performance aroused his interest enough to make him want to duplicate it. A sense of wrongdoing arose only when he heard his teacher's voice. Then he was in a hole.

"Just look at that ceiling!" said the teacher.

Teddy looked up. Sixteen blobs of chewed-up pulp dotted the ceiling, and Teddy's fear-dulled brain gradually registered a realization that he was receiving full credit for

all of them. He hardly heard anything his teacher said. But she wound up with a question he understood: "What do you have to say for yourself?"

Words caught in his throat.

"Speak up!"

Teddy stammered, "I can't say anything."

"Why not?"

"Because," Teddy managed to answer, "I like you!"

His teacher tried to say six different things. She failed. Finally, somewhat lamely, she said, "Oh, sit down!"

After school, all the boys told Teddy how smart he was. Maybe some of them learned something from the experience. If they did, it was only what Teddy already knew. It was something we can all wisely learn.

These two illustrations bring out the point that a display of friendliness on your part, especially when resentment and animosity are expected, will throw the other person off his guard and alter his opinion of you at once—and also his feeling toward you. From this we deduce that an easy way to replace unfriendliness with good feeling is to cleanse one's self of all animosity and to let this be evident.

Of course, Teddy didn't analyze his problem in any such detail. But he took action that brought those forces into play. And something else he did was equally important: He said what he really meant. His childishly frank and outspoken expression sprang from a desire to be friendly in the face of his teacher's vexation. Had his desire not been sincere, his method probably would not have worked.

Friendship is first of all a feeling, and the first step in winning a friend is to have the feeling of friendliness yourself. It must be genuine, which means that it must stem from an honest opinion of the other person's worth. So look for characteristics to admire in people. Probe for those

qualities that affect you favorably, and try to put the others out of your mind.

This is especially important in approaching the person who seems to antagonize you, for both you and he are probably conscious of negative qualities in the other.

When you have discovered reasons for liking someone, then arouse your own feelings of friendliness toward him. Think friendly thoughts, and give them effective expression. Go out of your way to demonstrate that you mean them. Simply by showing your friendly intentions and by backing them up with performance, you can easily increase the interest that others show in you. You can even supplant a growing animosity with a favorable attitude.

Of course, you, being older than Teddy, are more reserved, and you can hardly imagine yourself talking so frankly.

Well, in carrying out this dynamic method of creating friendships, you will find it necessary to break through some of the armor-plated inhibitions we all tend to build up over the years. They arise naturally from a desire to avoid the appearance of cheap familiarity and from a dread that others will withdraw into their own protective walls of reserve.

If your feelings for others are genuine, there is no reason to hesitate about expressing them. Don't be reluctant to show the other person that you like him. Be truly interested in him. Demonstrate your friendliness and make him aware of it. He may be surprised at first, but after he recovers he will most likely start being friendly in much the same way.

This normal impulse to return like with like is so universal that you can take for granted that people will respond to your advances in the same manner in which they have been offered.

Let us consider the case of a young man who learned this lesson later in life than Teddy Dalton.

Fred Gardner was twenty-one years old when he was made assistant manager of a small department store. He started right in to prove that the head of the store had made a wise choice. He tried to discharge his duties faithfully and to show everybody, especially his boss, that he was on his toes.

Fred did well for a young man, and he knew it. Maybe, a little bit, his success went to his head. But it gradually dawned on him that many of the older employees thought they could have done a good job too if they'd had the chance. In fact, several of them, possibly with some justice, let him know that they thought the opportunity should have gone to one of the old-timers.

Out of the ninety-six other employees, Fred seemed unable to make one single friend. Their expressions of resentment over seeing an outsider come in and pick off the juiciest plum growing on their private tree put Fred on the defensive, and so he made things even harder for himself. He found himself in a disturbing emotional swirl most of the time.

By the end of six weeks, Fred had accumulated a nice assortment of pet hates. Then he woke up.

He would win these people over. He made a list of the six fellow-workers whom he disliked most. He determined to earn their friendliness. So, for each, he developed a plan of approach. He began by deciding what he liked most about each of them. This wasn't easy to do, but gradually he filled out his list. Then he went to these people individually and told them what he admired about them. The effect was almost magical.

One after another, they responded. So Fred made up a new list of fellow-workers and went to work on them. More and more, he was greeted cordially as he passed through various departments. Occasionally someone stopped him to engage him in brief conversation. Of course, there were

holdouts. But these were gradually influenced by those already won over.

"Fred's not a bad fellow when you get to know him," they would say.

By getting down off his high horse and exerting himself to be friendly, Fred had created a different atmosphere. By deciding not to let himself remain unfriendly, and not to let others remain unfriendly toward him, he had opened the door to the solution of his whole problem.

In each of the three foregoing illustrations it is evident that fear plays a prominent part. Almost all unfriendliness has its roots in fear of one kind or another.

Your fear of the other person—of his greater strength or ability, of what he has done or may do to you, of his reaction to what you have done or may do to him—can cause unfriendliness on your part. Conversely, when the other person is afraid of you, he will probably feel unfriendly toward you. And when either of you feels unfriendly, the chances are that the other will feel unfriendly too. Such a feeling is usually reciprocal.

I used to believe that my own fear of people was a thing peculiar to me. Possibly you have felt that a fear of people was a thing peculiar to you. If you still have that feeling, you would find it difficult to ask others if their experience is similar. Most of us are not proud of our fears, so we tend to conceal them.

For my part, I felt so ashamed of this fear in my younger days that I kept it a secret. But when I started my career as a public speaking instructor, at the age of twenty-three, I learned that the fear of people is almost universal. Many of those who came to my classes admitted that their major purpose in joining was to overcome their fear of people—not fear of an audience but fear of people. That admission has come from clerks, salesmen, executives, undertakers, preach-

ers, lawyers, schoolteachers—men and women ranging in age from eighteen to eighty.

At one evening session, a young man just out of school stood up and said that the reason he was taking the course was that he shortly expected to apply for a job. He said, "Because I want to make banking my career, I shall have to go out and call on bank executives. I want to be able to walk into the office of a hardboiled, crusty old bank president, look him in the eye, and tell him I'm just as good as anybody he ever hired. I don't want to be so nervous that I can't think of what I should say. I want a clear mind, so that I can tell about my education and about the reasons why I think I would make a good banker."

He continued talking in that vein for two minutes, then sat down. After criticizing his talk, I called on the next student, who started out something like this: "I am that hardboiled, crusty old banker this young man just spoke of. The reason I am taking this course is that when he comes in to see me, I don't want to be embarrassed either." This second speaker went on to confess that all his life he had had fears and misgivings in the presence of others. The resulting confusion made it difficult for him to maintain an objective point of view in dealing with problems involving people. He wanted to overcome his fear of them and at the same time find out how he could allay their fears of him. At long last, he told us, he was going to do something about it. At the end of his talk, the room was filled with applause. You didn't need to be a mind reader to know that every person in the room understood the banker's point of view, and the boy's also.

Over the years I have discovered that a public speaking class offers an effective means for overcoming fear of people. I have also discovered that it is not the only means. It is what you know, rather than where you learn it, that counts.

Fear arises from lack of confidence in your ability to handle a practical situation. When you know you can handle situations as they develop, fear vanishes. Practice in making public talks is valuable because it demonstrates the groundlessness of many of our fears and dissipates others. By developing ability to prepare your remarks in advance, and to think under stress, you increase the number of situations in which you can perform successfully.

A public speaking class is a good place to learn to banish your fears. But, again, it is not the only place. Even in the privacy of your own bedroom, you can familiarize yourself with techniques of dispelling fear. And wherever you are, whenever a fear arises in your contacts with people, that is the best place to deal with fears.

One summer Saturday afternoon when Gene Foster was relaxing on his front porch, he saw three boys approaching. They were making their weekly collections for delivering newspapers, as he found out when he overheard this conversation:

“You go in and collect at this house!”

“No, you do it. I’m afraid of that man!”

Then the two older boys worked on the youngest, trying to pass the buck to him.

Gene got up out of his chair and called out, “How much do I owe?”

After settling that transaction, he sat down again, but not to relax. He turned things over in his mind. He had never considered himself a bad sort. He didn’t bite. So far as he knew, he didn’t even bark. Certainly, he didn’t go around scaring small boys.

Then a disquieting thought crossed his mind: If these kids are afraid of me, isn’t it possible that other people are too? Maybe that’s why I have so much trouble at the office.

On the job, Gene was a busy man. Maybe he had got into the habit of giving peremptory instructions. Maybe he had ignored some of his associates. He didn't see how he could accomplish all his work if every conversation had to be accompanied by courtly manners. No, in his job you had to be quick. But feeling that he had found a flaw in his conduct, he decided to try being gracious.

Next day nobody passed his desk without receiving a smile and a friendly word. For several weeks, he continued to dispense these bounties of friendliness. He noticed an improving reaction. People who talked to *him* were more friendly too. He felt better about them, and they felt better about him. Besides, there were fewer misunderstandings. People whose confusion had resulted from fear of a man who had given peremptory instructions were now at ease in his presence and able to get their ideas across. All these advantages, Gene realized, he owed to three small boys.

But it was hard for him to go the whole distance, because there was one man of whom *he* was afraid. So, in fact, was everybody else.

That man was the "big boss." Nobody said "Good morning" to him. But Gene felt that, having had a good idea, he should not select only certain people on whom to use it. So he included his boss in his plan.

It was hard to make a start, and it was still harder to go on. But he persisted, even though he received not so much as a grunt by way of reply. One day he got his reward.

Standing beside the water cooler, he overheard the old grouch telling an associate that Gene was the only one in the office who liked him well enough to greet him every morning without fail.

You can profit by this lesson, for you have many opportunities to dispense friendliness. Unless you are different from most of us, there are many people whom you have a

tendency to treat with scant courtesy. You may have acquired the habit of brushing past certain acquaintances and associates, and it is possible that their resentment displaced the feelings of friendliness they had for you.

Notice the people around you. Show that you are aware of them, and see to it that they know it. Then people will be natural and comfortable in your presence, and your dealings with them will be harmonious and productive.

This readiness to greet others is an important feature of an attractive personality. Far too many of us neglect it. You often see people walk past their co-workers in office or shop, with no sign of recognition. Yet even those who are passed several times a day like a nod or a smile. No one enjoys being left out. Even those who habitually ignore your overtures will respond sooner or later if you keep on hailing them. Try this policy on your more reserved co-workers and acquaintances. You will stimulate an improved return greeting often on your first effort. The response will be extra good if your greeting is unexpected. It may also be surprisingly warm if you occasionally call out a greeting, accompanied by a wave of the arm, from a distance, as to one of your acquaintances passing on the other side of the street—which many people seem reluctant to do.

The ideal greeting is to say something of interest and meaning to the other person. If you do not have this faculty, it can easily be developed. Notice the greetings that other people use, and see how you can adapt them. Figure out approaches of your own, and give them the twist of originality. You will find out how much more you feel like talking to a person when you have thought of a bit of personal news in which he is interested, or a friendly question you would like to ask. With practice you will quickly develop ability to command the ready word.

Make sure your greeting shows hearty interest in the other person and a spontaneous and natural pleasure in his presence. As a rule, avoid hackneyed words and phrases, but not completely. Remember, there are times when nothing is more appropriate than "Merry Christmas!" "Happy New Year!" or "The same to you!" But be especially careful of the wisecrack type of greeting, such as "What do you know?" The other person has to be a combination of a wit and a genius to give a suitable answer to this question—especially when he is in a sour mood. Too often it causes him embarrassment and constraint.

Many times you have been greeted with the standard "How do you do?" Even this greeting need not be stereotyped. Look at those four words. Say them over, aloud, and by putting the emphasis on each word in turn see how you can infuse new warmth into an old salutation. And remember, spontaneity is the soul of effectiveness. But spontaneity cannot be achieved by making a strenuous effort to think, because by the time you have come up with a clever phrase, the moment of opportunity will have passed. So, unless you can rely on yourself to come forth with something original on all occasions, it is a good idea to have a small supply of standard greetings on hand.

Fortify yourself with several friendly remarks. Keep them on tap. Use one at the beginning and another at the end of each greeting. Slip some in between.

These suggestions may seem to you to contain a hint of over-effusiveness, backslapping, or even currying favor, but there is little danger of these thoughts occurring to others. If you are actuated by sincere friendliness, you may be outspoken, and the other person will correctly appraise your expressions of good feeling. You will not find that you tend to gush over people, or to put on an act. On the contrary, you will develop the firm handshake, the straight meeting of

the eyes, and other evidences of sincerity—all projected with the force of your own personality.

So greet your acquaintances heartily. Include even those who fail to respond. Vary your form of salutation. Make it interesting and sometimes unexpected. But don't be a professional backslapper—at least not unless you were born to be one.

These points relate primarily to the problem of greeting the people you already know. But what about strangers? Frequently, in dealing with them, you will find it advantageous to resort to entirely different procedures. Let us consider an example that has long remained in my memory.

Until going away to college, I had left home only to visit relatives. Never had I spent a single night among strangers. For me, the word "homesickness" had no meaning.

Then I had a new experience—a six-hundred-mile railroad trip. It was packed with thrills. No realization of solitude engulfed me until I was left standing alone with my luggage on a little village railroad platform. I didn't know a soul, I suddenly realized. I felt black with despair. Thus, through personal experience, I acquired a definition for homesickness.

Then, from out of the ticket agent's office, there stepped a young man with red hair. Briskly, as though late for an appointment, he trotted over to me and shook hands. "My name's Guion Osborne," he said, "but everybody calls me Red. What's yours?"

I told him.

"We'll have to make arrangements with the drayman to handle your luggage," he said, "and that'll cost you fifty cents. Then I'll show you how to get up to the campus."

Within five minutes he was gone, and I was on my way. But I was no longer an alien.

It took me only a few days to discover that my new-found friend knew everybody, and everybody knew him. "Red Osborne," a faculty member once remarked, "never meets a stranger. To him there's no such thing."

What a remarkable concept! Yet, even your closest friend was once a stranger. So was everybody else outside your family circle—at least, if you admit to the existence of strangers.

To regard the other person as a stranger, just because you've never seen him before, is a perfect mechanism for erecting barriers. If that's what you want, all right. But if you don't want that, it will pay you to knock that concept out of your mind. Nobody is a stranger unless you think of him that way.

Picture, for a moment, one of your remote ancestors, a member of some tribe held together by the need for self-protection. He couldn't afford to be indiscriminately friendly with everybody. Because of rivalries between tribes, a lack of caution would have been dangerous indeed. Unless the other person was a member of his own tribe, or of some tribe known to be friendly, your ancient progenitor didn't dare approach him without enough weapons or sheer physical strength to be sure of winning out in a struggle. There were those who were acceptable, and those who weren't. Unless he knew he was approaching a friend, the only safe measure was to regard the other person as an enemy.

That your remote ancestor felt this way is attested by your own existence. Less cautious people were killed off. They didn't live to reproduce. But the ones who did had enough narrow escapes to lead them to train their children in the principles of safety in order to ensure survival.

It is only reasonable to suppose that you entered this life imbued with fears inherited from generations to whom caution among strangers of unknown origin was one of the laws

of self-preservation. Even the handshake, traditional gesture of friendliness, was once a precautionary measure. By accepting the other person's right hand, your ancestor prevented him from reaching for his sword, and at the same time your ancestor forsook his own opportunity of reaching for his. But you, his descendant, mingling among people of your own sort, seldom have to be on guard and take precautions. It will pay you to recognize this and set aside your fear of strangers.

Many students have asked me how to overcome their shyness in personal contacts. Over the years, I have evolved a simple procedure from repeated efforts to counsel them. It is this:

Every day, give yourself the task of entering into conversation with three different strangers. Pick them out of crowds, on streetcars or trains, on the street, at church, wherever you meet them. Figure out two or three approaches in your mind, then use the most promising. Just get safely through the first minute. After that, you will almost always find yourself comfortably at ease. The first minute is the hard part—and it is this part that does useful work. Only when you are performing against resistance does your ability improve. Carry out this task three times every day, and you will quickly gain confidence.

None of the students who faithfully applied this formula for several weeks ever reported failure. They always said that their fear of conversational inadequacy was greatly reduced—or wholly overcome.

Here is the story of a man who gave me some pointers:

Lyman Betz has the faculty for getting acquainted with strangers. Every interesting-looking stranger challenges his ingenuity. He performs his self-introductions with such ease that no stress or tension ever arises.

"How do you do it?" I asked.

"I study the other person," he told me, "from an angle that prevents his noticing me. I try to imagine what interests him. Often there is some clue—a camera, the cut of his clothes, a newspaper, stickers on his luggage. Something about his behavior gives me a lead. Often that which attracts his attention serves. Then I find some related subject and cast about for a remark or question that I think will capture his mind. The instant that is accomplished, he loses his strangeness. His thoughts mesh with mine, leaving no room for resentment or curiosity at my behavior."

This seemed like an excellent technique.

"Did this come naturally to you, or did you have to learn it?" I asked.

He chuckled. "It came," he answered, "as the result of study and effort. During the war I made frequent trips between Philadelphia and New York. Those train rides always bored me. I tried to blot out my boredom by reading, but reading on the train almost ruined my eyes. Then I got an idea: I would use these periods of dullness to practice overcoming my fear of strangers.

"At first it was hard. Several times, after stealing one or two glances at my seat-mate, I would spend the whole trip trying vainly to find some opening remark. Finally I concluded that I should become reckless. After all, the world wouldn't explode if I made a mistake. Besides, I'd probably not see the other person again during the rest of my life. I soon found that almost anything serves for an opening remark."

There was another question I wanted to ask Lyman Betz. "No doubt," I said, "you have met many interesting people. But what is the biggest advantage you have gained by this experience?"

"I have gained," he said, "the ability to feel natural and comfortable in a conversation anywhere during the first few

seconds. By tackling what was, for me, a difficult problem, I made all other conversational problems seem easy by contrast."

What I have been trying to bring out in all these illustrations is a universal truth: that in this life we get just about the kind of treatment we invite. The person who looks for personality trouble will find it, whereas the person who seeks friendliness, even among strangers—nay, even among his enemies—will find that. Each individual is free to make a choice for himself. If he wants to get the most pleasure and benefit from his social and business connections, he will cultivate friendliness.

The number of a person's friends is a measure of his contact with the world. There are few truly solitary occupations, such as prospecting for gold. Therefore, by enlarging his number of friends, anyone can open doors of opportunity whose existence might otherwise have remained unsuspected. He can increase his chances for satisfaction in social relations, recreation, and every activity that makes life worth living.

Obviously, the first place to seek friendly relations is within the circle of people whom you know but whom you do not now consider your friends—in short, your acquaintances. Among them are undoubtedly people you don't like and people who don't like you. You will gain immeasurably by establishing friendly relations with them. This calls for hard work: You need to overcome your antipathy for those whom you do not like and the antipathy of those who do not like you.

You will profit doubly from working on these two groups: first of all, by clearing up old animosities, and second, by gaining new friends. All too often, the person whom you have snubbed turns up in a position that permits him to grant you, or withhold from you, an important favor.

By dealing with the difficult groups, you will enjoy the stimulus of succeeding under adverse conditions, which is a firm basis for the ultimate goal—namely, to win the friendship of every person you meet.

The value of this manner of proceeding becomes apparent when you consider the importance, for your personal success, of having friends. You must have among your friends key people who can advance your career, even people from whom you might want to borrow, and others who can make decisions favorable to your interests when opportunity arises. On the other hand, the very nature of friendship makes it difficult to cultivate friends if your efforts are identified with ulterior motives. Therefore you must go beyond this, and actively seek the friendliness of every person you meet, which will include all those whom you can help as well as those who can help you.

There are, of course, physical limitations to the number of people with whom you can maintain more or less constant personal relations. But you can go beyond that circle by becoming widely and favorably known. You can cause people to be glad you passed their way, and to welcome the chance to see you again.

So, in all your personal associations, cultivate universal friendliness. As a result you may find that you have discovered an "Open sesame!" to a series of spectacular opportunities.

## Chapter 7

### *Taking Part in an Introduction*

**G**EORGE Davis introduces people to each other easily. He seems to sense, far in advance, whatever felicitous words the introduction needs. And they are never the same old hackneyed expressions you have heard ten thousand times before.

One day I asked George how he did it.

"As a young man," he said, "I was painfully shy. Out in company, you could always pick me out of a crowd. I was that scared-looking oaf in the corner, trying to hide. Everybody knew me as 'Silent George.'

"Meeting people was a trial for me, and as often as possible I slid out of it. Walking along the street with a friend, the sight of an approaching stranger who recognized my companion would plunge me into sudden panic. Rather than face the expected introduction, I would hastily excuse myself. I would pretend that I was late, and must go on at once.

"After such an encounter I would accuse myself of moral weakness. I would feel physically sick.

"It wasn't any high-minded desire to improve myself that finally wrought the change. It was nothing more nor less than self-defense. I imagined that I was well on the road to losing my mind over this silly fear. In desperation I decided to correct this weakness before a complete disintegration of my character set in."

"Did you find," I asked, "that it was hard?"

"You bet I did! It was like sticking my hand into a blast furnace. But my fear of losing my mind prodded me on. What later astonished me was the realization that the ingenuity needed to duck an introduction is greater than that needed to handle one successfully."

Now George has had ten years of experience in making introductions without fear. As a student in one of my classes, he made a talk in which he gave his philosophy. He said:

"An introduction is the beginning of a relationship between two people. Usually most people are diffident about handling one or participating in one. Of all human situations, an introduction is the most revelatory of the individual's degree of *savior-faire*. And its possibilities for the building up of a real friendship depend, in great measure, on the initial impression made.

"Therefore it is important to acquire readiness in knowing how to act in every introduction—whether you are being introduced to another or are yourself making the introduction.

"Recognize that the other fellow is nervous, too. Break the ice yourself. That gives you something to do.

"Fortify yourself with a set of stock greetings. Think back over recent introductions in which you have taken part, pick out a few outstanding greetings, memorize them, and you will have a useful repertoire. Of course, the conventional 'How do you do?' or 'I'm glad to know you!' is always acceptable, but on occasion say something like, 'Well, I've been hoping for a long time to meet you!'

"The habit of thinking of something suitable to say during an introduction is easy to acquire. All it takes is patient effort. Soon you find it possible to raise a laugh or make a comment that dispels awkwardness and dissolves tension.

The main thing is not to let your mind go blank. Instead, gear it to the problem of figuring out some attention-getting comment.

"The person who is going to avoid embarrassment when making an introduction is the one who instinctively knows what to do and say. With practice, such performance becomes automatic. There are only a few requirements.

"First is the ability to recognize when an introduction is appropriate. How often have you seen two old friends come together and chat intimately while the companion of one of them is ignored? If you happen to be involved in such a meeting, say, 'I want to meet your friend.' Just be sure you say it in a way that will not embarrass the person guilty of the oversight.

"Second is the ability to remember names. But don't try to slide out of an introduction just because you don't happen to remember a name. Go ahead anyhow. Ask for the name if you have to. Or create the impression that it is on the tip of your tongue, and for some reason you can't remember it. The possessor of the name will be willing to help you out if necessary, so the faster you fly into action, the better.

"Third is the knowledge of form—knowing who should be introduced to whom. A man should always be introduced to a woman, a child to an adult, young people to older members of either sex. If one of the group is particularly important or well known, or holds a high public office, all others should be introduced to him. When you say, 'Mr. Smith, I want you to meet Mr. Jones,' the latter is being introduced to the former. Other acceptable forms of introduction are 'Mrs. Watson, may I present Mr. Williams?' and the simple 'Mrs. Watson, Mr. Williams.'

"Often it is wise to give a bit of interesting information about either, or both, of the individuals involved: 'I want you to meet a very particular friend,' or 'Somebody you'll

like,' or 'My niece.' Any one of a thousand phrases will help people get acquainted.

"I used to practice making mental pictures of various combinations of my friends and acquaintances. After all, it is the people you know whom you will be most likely to introduce to each other. So pick out two of them, and decide how you would introduce them. Then pick out two others, and so on. Thus you will fortify yourself with an assortment of forms of introduction that may be useful later. Look for something original, with attention value, that will make each person feel comfortable. This will pave the way for immediate friendly conversation. When you use one of these imagined introductions, you get the thrill of your life.

"An introduction handled graciously puts people at their ease and *en rapport*. Their conversation becomes friendly and natural by virtue of a few appropriate words that overcame an uncomfortable pause. The art of saying those words is worth practicing and developing.

"There is an obvious way to gain ability in handling introductions. Just make a practice of introducing yourself to people—at church, at lodge and society meetings, and at any other place where all are present for a common purpose. Practically everybody wants to be friendly, but there are some who just don't know how to proceed and are timid about making overtures. So open the door for them by taking the initiative yourself. You will find that one of the easiest ways to make a stranger remember you favorably is through a spontaneous and friendly approach. Since your mind will be occupied with making the stranger at ease, you will unconsciously acquire an increasing ability to say the right thing."

The conversational part of an introduction is very important, but the memory for names is possibly even more impor-

tant. Consider for a moment the significance a man's name has for him.

A good name is one of man's most priceless possessions. It is "rather to be chosen than great riches," according to the Book of Proverbs. Everybody makes an effort to give his name a meaning that will contribute to his sense of importance. Effective use of his name on your part will arrest his attention and open an avenue of contact.

I used to get my shoes blacked in a Philadelphia railroad station by an energetic and friendly man who had a way with his customers. The second time I visited his stand, to my astonishment he called me by name. How he learned it, I'll never know. When he died years later, the newspapers carried obituaries. His estate included several blocks of houses which he had acquired by thrifty use of tips received from customers who were flattered by his use of their names.

Once I had a job in which my duties included purchasing stationery for my employer. Most of this was done by telephone. One of the stationers had an order clerk known to me only as a voice and a name. I identified myself during our first conversation, and thereafter I would say, "Is that Miss Jones?" and she would respond, "Yes, what can we do for you today, Mr. Wetherill?"

Everybody has heard of famous people who attribute much of their success to their phenomenal memory for names. But remembering names is a technique that all of us can acquire.

Respect the other person's interest in his own name. Respect the name itself. Treat it as though you were handling an object of exceptional merit. A name will often provide exactly the conversational opening you need. You might, for example, speculate about its origin, or relate it to some famous man or local citizen. Even though its bearer has heard similar references ten thousand times, he will almost always

welcome a repeat performance from some new source. It is a form of applause of which practically nobody ever tires.

You might try a little trick that I learned from my friend Jim Powers. Jim liked to learn the other person's name surreptitiously, so that he could spring it unexpectedly, before his knowledge of it was suspected. When a stranger entered a group, Jim would quietly ask someone, "What's his name?" Then he would look for an opportunity to put his knowledge to use before the introduction was made. "You would be surprised," he told me, "at the curiosity over the source of your information. The average man's impression is that you were trying to find out 'Who is that important person?'"

If you are doing the introducing, pronounce each name so clearly that you cannot be misunderstood. When someone is being introduced to you, be sure to get his name correctly. If it is muttered unintelligibly, get a repetition. Or else ignore the introducer and gain the information from the authoritative source, namely, the owner of the name. Shake his hand, look him in the eye, clearly show your friendliness, and say, "I want to get that name correctly." He'll certainly be glad to give it to you.

When you get the name, be sure that you keep it. One of the easiest ways of attracting the attention of any casual acquaintance is to show that you remember his name the next time you meet him. He will be even more impressed if he cannot remember your name, because you have given evidence that your interest in him has exceeded his interest in you.

On the other hand, if you have forgotten his name, it is difficult to conceal the fact. You can say that you failed to catch it at the time of the introduction. Or you can ask him to spell it, but this will backfire if it turns out to be Smith or Jones. The best plan is to remember it.

The operations of memory are so well understood now and methods of associative thinking so thoroughly worked out that it is easy to develop a good memory. The following method has proved useful in remembering names.

Fit the name into a rhyme or nonsense jingle of some sort. "Mr. Taylor looks like a sailor"; "Mrs. Clair is very fair"; "Mr. Horst eats borscht." This is an old, old system. It will usually serve you well. But it has its dangers, too. The weakness of this strategem is illustrated in the following story.

"I never can remember my landlady's name," a young man confided to one of his friends, "so I keep it written on a little piece of paper. But I get embarrassed, always referring to that!"

"Let me see it?" asked his friend. On the paper he read, "Mrs. Drummoch."

After a moment of reflection, this helpful friend went on: "I'll give you a little rhyme that will solve your problem. 'Old Mrs. Drummoch fills my stomach.' That will be easy to remember, so just say it over to yourself whenever you want to recall her name."

Next morning, as he breezed downstairs to breakfast, the landlady walked in from the front porch with the morning newspaper. Smiling all over his face, the young boarder called out, "Good morning, Mrs. Kelly!"

While the rhyming method often works, it will pay you to develop further means of remembering people's names.

To remember any concept, get it sharp and clear in the first place, recall it often enough to deepen its impact on your mind, and invest it with associative ideas. This gives you three rules for use when trying to remember a man's name: (1) Make sure that you have it clear in your mind (sharp original impression). If necessary, ask for a repetition. (2) Take steps to deepen this original impression.

Repeat the name several times to yourself, call the man by name two or three times during your conversation, and refer to him by name after he has departed. Notice whether the name is unusual and make sure you know its spelling. (3) Attach the name to your network of associations by associating it with other names or with an arbitrarily chosen scheme of associations. You can develop a system of mental images by creating "memory pictures" relating the person and his name through some symbolic mental representation of your own.

Here is a system that has proved its value in practical use for many purposes—a system that will quickly get you out of the "I-have-trouble-remembering-names-but-never-forget-a-face" class.

The majority of people find it easier to think in images than in concrete terms. Most likely you can close your eyes and call up in your mind a clear picture of some thing or person. Because most of us have minds that work that way, we have an easy avenue to the improvement of our ability to remember names, if we will only use it.

Pause for a moment to call up an image. See, in your mind's eye, the pictures of several persons whom you know well. Look for the characteristic details of their faces. Then try to call up a picture of one or two persons whom you have met within the past few days. Do not be discouraged if you have difficulty at first. This visual faculty can be improved with reasonable exercise. And since the recollection of a face is so easy, it should become a key to recalling the name also. One of the reasons we remember faces so easily is that we are confronted with the face on successive occasions, and practically every face is unusual, while many names are common to many people. If a name is sufficiently out of the ordinary, we are more likely to remember it.

So, form an image in your mind, letting it, somehow, contain not only the face but also a hint of the name that should be associated with it. Whenever you do this successfully, reappearance of the same face will remind you of the mental image, which will in turn remind you of the name.

Suppose you meet a man named Smith. Get the image of his face into your mind, and let the image include an anvil balanced on top of the man's head, to suggest the idea of a blacksmith. Make the picture so clear in your mind that the next time you see Mr. Smith the complete image will recur. The thing is so ridiculous that its very novelty will assist you.

Try to put action into your picture. Exert your imagination to make it spectacular. Suppose you meet Mr. Swing. You can picture him suspended in a swing, the breeze blowing through his hair; or swaying back and forth on his feet like an inverted pendulum; or swinging at the end of a rope that he clutches in his teeth; or swinging by his toes upside down from an overhead bar. Just be sure your image is not so far-fetched that it fails to suggest the right idea.

At first you may be self-conscious about resorting to this technique. But you don't have to explain it to anybody. As long as it serves you it will continue useful. You don't have to tell Mr. Bullock, for example, that you think of him as a little bull, but you'll remember his name anyhow.

Even with an unusual name there is an easy way of creating an image from it. You can break the name down into its elements, until you find one or more words that have meaning. Mr. Weldy might be pictured standing in a well, with his face enclosed in the letter "D." Mr. Tommassio might be pictured in the following sequence: Somebody you already know named Tom; one of the progenitors of a mule; the waves of the ocean; and somebody who, on being kicked, is exclaiming "Oh!" I cite this sequence because it is one I actually used fifteen years ago. While I have seldom had need

to recall the name since then, I can always remember it at will. I also remember Mr. Hustleton, who was hustling tons of work across his desk the day I met him in Atlantic City. I remember Mr. Disston from creating a nonsense image in which he is cutting off his own head with a saw. I put Mr. Cook into a chef's cap and draped an apron around him. But it is better to have him vigorously stirring the contents of a heavy iron caldron that is suspended by chains from a tripod, over an open fire.

The more dramatics you can put into your picture, the more easily it will be recalled. The more spectacular, the more foolish, the more ridiculous or humorous, the better.

All this takes a little ingenuity and a little time, but if you form this type of association, you will remember the names of nine out of ten of the people you meet.

I have had my full share of difficulty in remembering names. Otherwise I would not have resorted to consciously contrived techniques. But because of them, I have found it possible to meet a roomful of thirty to forty men and call all by name an hour later. I think it reasonable to assume, in view of my own past difficulties, that if I can do this so can you.

Here is a drill to help you acquire this ability to associate the right name with the right face in a large group. Pick up any newspaper or magazine. Run through the illustrations of people. Learn their names from the captions. Then form a bit of nonsense imagery for each. Be sure the face is prominent in your mental picture, and let it be your clue to remembering the name. Do this with about fifteen faces. Then run through the illustrations again, but don't look at the captions. See how many of your invented images you can recall. See how many you can translate correctly into the names they represent. As a result of this practice, you will learn which type of imagery is reliable for you and

which is not. You will know what to avoid, and what to use.

Have you ever wondered what to do with an hour's idle time on the train or in a restaurant? Use it by looking around at people. Give each person a name. Then work out a specific image for each. After having done this, go back over the same group and see how many names you can recall. This kind of practice improves your faculty for remembering the names of the people you meet.

The imagery system will work, too, in implanting your own name firmly in others' minds. Create a suitable image by which your name can be remembered. Find something that will capture interest—something ridiculous enough to be remembered but not foolish enough to make you self-conscious. Mr. Bean, for instance, always emphasizes "Bean, as in soup." Your problem may be more complicated, but after you have solved it, the chances are that people will not forget your name.

Of all mental processes, that of cultivating the memory yields some of the best of returns. Practice soon develops an automatic habit of relating names to both faces and ideas. If you make it a point of pride to remember the name of each new person you meet, you will be surprised to discover how rapidly your memory will improve. You can soon rely on it with a minimum of conscious effort.

If you want to get along well with people and make favorable impressions on them, you cannot afford to neglect the obviously flattering touch of remembering names. Since it is your business to get along with people, it is also your business to remember them by name.

## Chapter 8

### *Winning Friends at First Sight*

SO FAR we have been talking about things to say when meeting people and trying to win their friendship. But the discussion would be incomplete without consideration of even more important steps in the making of friends.

Some people, by their very presence, before they have spoken a word, awaken our friendship and interest. By merely looking at them, we decide at once that we are going to like them.

We all recognize this quality. Most of us call it by some indefinable name, such as personality, and let it go at that. If we go further, however, we can discover of what this quality consists, and we can apply this knowledge to our own development.

As a girl and later as a woman, Muriel was one of the finest examples of feminine pulchritude I have ever known. She could have been a cover girl, a beauty-contest winner, a glamorous actress. In a masculine way, a man whom we shall call Elbert was just as handsome. His tall, statuesque figure and arresting features set him apart in any group. But neither Muriel nor Elbert could win friends at sight. After one quick look at them you would decide to look elsewhere if you wanted companionship.

Eleanor, on the other hand, if you had analyzed her physical charm, would have aroused only sympathy in you. But

you didn't analyze it. You were too busy yielding to her other charms. She had something, even though it had little to do with beauty in the accepted sense. And as for Clifford, he was as homely as mud, yet endowed with the gift of winning friends at sight.

All of us have known such people. From them we have learned that beauty, good looks, a fine physique, and splendid coloring are not necessary attributes of the indefinable quality we are discussing. They help, but they are not the deciding factors.

That is important, for each of us has to accept his physical features as they are. We cannot change them, but we can set them off to better advantage.

Austin Kemble is a case in the point. People were instinctively attracted to him. You instantly felt his presence. What gave him that quality was his abounding but controlled energy and his resilient spirit. His appearance of quiet liveliness and vitality seemed to rise from a fire of enthusiasm burning down inside, creating physical and emotional forces that shone through his eyes. Without moving a muscle, he appeared vital and abundantly alive. Somehow he kindled in you the same potential energy that you perceived in him.

So a fundamental factor that controls the first impression is physical well-being. If you recall an occasion when you have had to meet a number of people while overtired or ill, you will remember how quickly they sensed your condition, and how difficult it was to "get across" to them. In other words, the power of your personality varies directly with your energy reserves—your store of physical and mental vitality.

It follows that good physical condition is a primary requirement of a sparkling, attractive personality. Anything that undermines health should be avoided, including insufficient sleep, too much or too little exercise, overeating, or any other physical abuse or overindulgence. Only by elimi-

nating these drains on vitality can you feel at your best and make others feel at their best in your presence. By systematically checking your routine you will find it not at all difficult to break bad habits.

*That is fine as far as it goes, you say, but either you have such energy or you don't. And if you lack it, what can you do about it?*

Well, here is a procedure that has done wonders for several people I know.

Begin by asking yourself if you are in good health. If there is any doubt, see your physician. Get a thorough medical examination, such as would be given by a life insurance company's physician in determining whether or not you are acceptable for a large risk.

Then—assuming that you have been given a clean bill of health—look into some of your habits and daily routines. Do you get enough sleep? See whether you allow yourself sufficient hours, and whether you sleep soundly. Remember that no matter how much energy you expend during the day, you should be able to reinvigorate yourself during a single night's rest. Inspect those of your daily activities that consume vigor. Decide whether any of them could be causing trouble. Ask yourself whether other people in normally good health can sustain them without difficulty. If you decide they can, don't expect to increase your energy by eliminating any one of those activities. You might simply be depriving yourself of healthful exercise.

Next, make a list of your normal physical occupations in an average day. Include all routine activities: cutting grass, removing ashes, making repeated trips up and down stairs, as well as your daily dozen—if any—and active participation in sports. See whether these performances include frequent exertion beyond your routine needs. If your highest peak of exercise is just above the exertion of your normal routine,

you can expect to drag along. But frequent exercise demanding considerably more vigor than your normal habits, no matter how you get it, should logically create energy reserves that let you handle every ordinary exertion without strain.

So much for the physical side. But there is another side. Some people get sufficient sleep, have neither too much nor too little exercise, are in good health, and yet are tired and devoid of strength. The cause of their incessant fatigue is usually mental and emotional in nature. If you are not one of those people, you won't be much interested in the next few pages. In that case skip over, if you like, to the top of page 132. But if you are one of those people, it is likely that you are about to discover the answer to your problem of feeling constantly tired.

Emotional condition is the counterpart of physical condition, and both have potent effects on your personal attractiveness. So if you have an emotional problem, you had better plan to do something about it. Handling such trouble is tricky. However, here is a procedure used by one of my students. It has the backing of modern psychologists.

"Almost always," said this student, "we have enough energy for the things we really want to do. Most of our trouble springs from boredom and lack of interest. So the easiest way to develop your vitality is to stimulate enthusiasm for everything you do."

"Get interested. Start by acting as though you were already interested. Treat every matter as though it were the most important thing in the world—which, for the moment, it is. Put vigor into every performance—simply by behaving as though you already possessed it. You will be surprised at how quickly such make-believe can become reality."

There is emotional trouble that comes from too little interest in life and its problems, but there is also emotional trouble that comes from internal friction. Such friction

may be generated by unsatisfied but proper ambitions, in which case you can eliminate it by seeing that you make satisfactory progress toward the indicated goals and objectives. But the friction may come from ambitions that are frustrated because they pull against each other. It may also be generated by a habit of entertaining too many negative thoughts. If you are torn between contradictory ambitions or if you habitually support an array of cynical and disquieting ideas and desires, you can logically expect to have a good deal of emotional fatigue. In any such case, you will labor under stress that will get across to the people with whom you deal. They may not be able to interpret it, but they will be aware of it. Therefore it is important to examine your attitudes and emotions. Amend them, when necessary, along lines that will emphasize your desirable qualities to the world.

Bill Caufman wanted additional furniture for his home, and at the same time he wanted to save his money. While he was working, the joys of a vacation engaged his interest; at the movies, he worried about his work. At the office he wished to please his boss, but felt bitter about demands made on him. He wanted to work hard and make enough money to retire, in order to avoid working so hard. Always he wanted to be where he wasn't, do what he couldn't, and satisfy conflicting ambitions. Because of all these internal conflicts, he got into a habit of harboring many negative thoughts.

As a consequence Bill was perpetually upset and disturbed. His thoughts traveled in circles around his frustrations. His physical and emotional resources were constantly exhausted by disturbances that kept him in a state of suppressed excitement. A hard lump seemed to have formed somewhere inside his solar plexus.

Insatiable desires, if they occur only occasionally, are natural. They furnish both guidance and drive. But any-

body who is engulfed in them is inadequate to the task at hand. He is sure to have a great deal of trouble.

Bill Caufman dealt with his dilemma by effecting a mental house cleaning. He made a list of the things he found himself thinking about most often. About each, he asked questions like the following: Does this put me in a good frame of mind? Does it invite perpetual discouragement by aiming at an ambition beyond my reach? Can I somehow reconcile it with my other ambitions? Should I think about it more often, or not at all? Can I rectify my thinking on this subject so that it will give me a lift instead of dragging me down? By constant effort aimed at the adjustment of conflicts and the removal of rubbish from his mind, Bill altered his entire mental and emotional state for the better. At once he became attractive to others.

If you suffer from a state of perpetual and unexplained fatigue, it will pay you to make a similar analysis.

The trouble with internal friction is that it generates anxiety and fear. It interferes with all routine activities and tends to undermine success. Because it does, it produces more anxiety and fear. Thus, the internal friction feeds on itself until its cause has been corrected. Allowed to persist, it can lead to a habit of emotional tension. That habit may continue long after it has ceased to be supported by the events of current life. Many persons are victims of that habit without knowing it—in fact without knowing that such a habit can exist. That habit, if you have it, will do much to destroy your attractiveness to others. Moreover, it will correspondingly reduce your ability to see whatever attractiveness may exist in them. So in that case, you had better look into the causes and cures of habitual tension.

Consider, for a moment, what happens to you when a sudden emergency arises. Under the stress of a disturbing prospect or event, even though you are normally stable, you

will feel an immediate surge of emotion. That emotion will take the form of excitement. It will induce chemical changes in your body, and these changes prepare you for vigorous and perhaps violent action. They represent nature's way of providing you with energy so that you can protect yourself from danger or take advantage of opportunity. Those energies must be used, or the chemicals generated to support them will poison your system and lead to outright physical distress. Mixed with that distress will be more anxiety and fear—and that, if you have such trouble, may be the source of your reduced physical, emotional, and mental strength. Your debility must be corrected before you can become attractive to other people.

When the energy of excitement is rightfully used, no trouble ensues. But a state of excitement often plunges you into a dilemma. Instead of action, you lapse into indecision. Meanwhile your tensions increase. Before you settle your problem, another arises. Before you dispose of that one, perhaps there are several more. The original cause has dropped out of sight. By this time, all you know is that you are disturbed, but you may not be sure of how or why. At that point, the habit of emotional tension is established. Until you correct the trouble, you will be forever tired and disturbed.

It is important to realize that this habit of emotional tension can be fed by any sort of conflict, whether that conflict results from lack of sufficient interest to meet life's problems, from unsatisfied but proper ambitions, from contradictory desires and aims, from negative and destructive thoughts, from anger and resentment, from a refusal to face unpleasant facts, or from anything else that sets up internal friction. Sometimes the original causes of tension are difficult or impossible to trace. For example, there may be deep-seated trouble eating away at your emotions though

you have long since lost any conscious recollection of it. Maybe it is the result of some experience so distasteful that you firmly put it out of your mind and resolved never to think of it again. But more likely, perhaps, you have just conditioned yourself to a way of looking at life that keeps you tense despite the fact that many of your reasons for tension no longer exist.

Your condition will take the form of unexplainably overwrought nerves. Since you have a logical mind, you demand some plausible explanation. If you do not understand the mechanism of habitual tension, you instinctively look to your environment for the source of your perturbation. You pick out your most disturbing trouble, and ascribe to it the distress that you feel. You tackle that trouble in an effort at correction. When you have eliminated it, you are surprised to discover that your disturbance has not diminished. With your sensations of distress continuing, you look again and again. Each time you think you have found the true cause, but no. So you continue. This process goes on and on until every cause you can think of has been tested to no avail. That can be an endless process, and you can burn up unlimited energy without success. You are trapped in a vicious circle that you cannot escape until you break the habit of emotional tension.

If you are perpetually excited and anxious without apparent reason; if you cannot sit back and relax without having your thoughts turn to your worries; if you constantly analyze your fears, misgivings, failures, and shortcomings, to the exclusion of your achievements; in fact, if you habitually spend your time thinking about yourself and find your thoughts intermingled with anxiety or fear that you cannot explain, then you might wisely assume that you are a victim of habitual tension.

Simply understanding your condition will immediately put you on the track to correction of your trouble.

Stimulate your interest in life. Satisfy your ambitions. Resolve your conflicts. Wash out your negative thinking. Solve your problems. But do more than these things we have already discussed. Give your mind constructive new projects to think about. Go to the movies. Engage in new activities. Get into lively conversations. Dig up new emotional and intellectual soil. Chart a path of progress. Lay out a schedule—one that is easy to adhere to—and then live up to it. Get all the pleasure you can out of every forward step. But—most important of all—engage in a continuous effort to calm your excitement and bring it under control. When you are reasonably sure that the cause is habitual tension, it will become comparatively easy to turn that excitement off. Practice until you can prevent yourself from getting emotional without visible cause—doing so, after all, just doesn't make sense. Eliminating such excitement won't be easy, but it will be worth doing.

If you have trouble correcting your difficulty quickly, perhaps it is because you have not yet learned to control your conflicts and negative emotions. But it could also be that your body is freighted with the accumulated poisons of excitement. Perhaps you have sustained those poisons so long that, in effect, it has become your normal condition to continue sustaining them. You are still in the physiological condition of excitement that carries over as a lingering symptom of earlier trouble now well on the way to correction. If that is true, it is important to realize that you must retrain your body by feeding yourself only constructive emotions until you get your system back into a normal balance. No long-standing habit of emotional tension can be cleared up in a day. It's a matter of correcting your habits and living by a set of constructive new ones long enough to permit

necessary physiological readjustments. Sooner or later the change will come, and when it does come you will know it. Other people will see the difference, too.

This program of acquiring good physical and mental balance cannot fail to impress itself upon your whole bearing, including your facial expression. The latter is most important in its influence on others.

Have you ever noticed the lines that seam a person's face from middle life onward? Sooner or later your face will thus exhibit your character before the world, presenting an instant record of your past emotional attitudes. If it outlines friendliness, you will attract friends. If it displays good humor, you will win popularity. If it presents a picture of confidence and high purpose, you will gain respect. And you can do all these things as the result of a single glance in your direction.

You will therefore find it well worth your while to study your facial expressions before the passage of years has indelibly graven an image that cannot easily be altered.

Go to your mirror. Scowl at it, frown into it, make yourself look unhappy. Notice where the lines tend to fall, and remind yourself that years of such habitual expression will make these lines ineradicable. Then go to the other extreme. Find out where the laughing lines are, and see how they increase your attractiveness. Add the engaging touch of a twinkle in the eyes. Get your face the way you want it. Then realize that, at your option, you can earn the right to wear these lines. All that is required is to make sure your facial expression tends in the desired direction.

An old Chinese proverb says that a picture is worth ten thousand words. In deciding on the facial expression you wish to cultivate, remember that the same is true of a smile. A smile can easily predispose anyone, even a stranger, to friendliness. A smile dissolves indifference, overcomes re-

sentment, bridges gaps between enemies, and provides a smooth-flowing lubricant for improving all human contacts. It produces an extra profit in any market, under any conditions, anywhere in the world.

Try this procedure: From among your acquaintances, select someone who possesses a smile that you would like to emulate. Or clip the picture of such a person from a newspaper or magazine. In the privacy of your bedroom, sit before a mirror. With your eyes closed, let your face relax into what you consider your normal expression. Then open your eyes and look at it. Try to find out how you look when you're not thinking about how you look. Next, turn on your most attractive smile. Examine it critically. How does it stack up? Will it convey to others what you wish to establish in their minds? Experiment until you find ways of improving it. Notice which muscles are used.

Next time you go forth among people, benefit from the knowledge thus gained. Flex the same muscles, in the same way. As a result, you'll tend to give yourself the state of mind your expression indicates. But return to your mirror occasionally, to check up on yourself. Each time, begin by closing your eyes while you arrange your smile, then look to see how you are doing.

When you have thus acquired, by practice, an attractive and winning smile, the next step is to learn when to use it effectively. The answer to that is simple: Use it when you mean it.

Have you ever known somebody so impressed with the importance of a smile that he adopted it as his characteristic facial expression, but then forgot to keep it alive by feeding it from his heart? Any such smile quickly degenerates into a grin—a counterfeit of a real smile. Spontaneous good feeling makes your smile genuine.

Just as important as your facial expression, in the impression made on others, are your general appearance, your posture, and your manner of dress.

A correct posture does not cause physical discomfort. If your posture causes fatigue, it defeats your purpose. Walking very straight—while making the right places bulge and holding in others—might improve your health, but we are now concerned with your effect on people. Excessive attention to posture could give you the appearance of a physical-culture perfectionist. So relax. Carry yourself easily—chin up and stomach in. Your object is to develop the confident carriage of an up-and-coming person—a successful man or a girl who is dated for the big dance.

After all, posture truly reflects a state of mind. Slouching indicates flagging attention. Look at people on a train or street car, and see how few appear happy. Notice how, frequently, a slumped position is accompanied by an expression of boredom. Guard against that combination for it detracts from good appearance. Don't let your mouth go slack. Instead, keep alert. Make yourself sparkle. Cultivate present-mindedness. Be ready for a quick uptake in any situation.

An easy way to get yourself into present-mindedness is to act as though you were stretching your faculties to catch faint indications of action in your environment, such as the sound of a falling pin. Get the habit of noticing what occurs off to one side, in your outer areas of vision. Get yourself into that state of mental alertness as you go about your normal affairs. You'll be surprised at how quickly you can make it a habit. You'll be surprised, too, at how much better you feel, and how much more you accomplish. As a result, you will increase your chances of recognizing and using opportunities when they arise. You will also become more interesting and attractive to other people.

Your manner of dressing may not be so important as some of the other fundamentals discussed, but the fact remains that your clothing makes up 90 per cent of your visible exterior. Therefore it deserves attention. And unless it is becoming to you, it can adversely affect your relations with others. Let us consider an extreme example.

Duncan Campbell was a clever young engineer. He got along with people and was well regarded by his associates. Just one fault held him back. Day after day he came to work looking like a backwoodsman.

Characteristically he wore a soiled lumberjacket, khaki breeches, loud-colored woolen stockings, hobnailed boots, and often a bandanna kerchief knotted around his neck. His hair—a sight to behold—gave him the appearance of sudden surprise.

In his work, Duncan really had the goods.

I noticed him occasionally among his associates. That wasn't hard to do. So I inquired about him. "That young fellow," I was told, "has more engineering knowledge and ability for his age than you would consider possible. It is on men like him that this company's future depends."

One day I met him in a secluded stairway. I asked him, "Would you like me to do you a favor?"

His face lighted up in friendliness, as I had hoped. If it hadn't, I would have had to change my tactics. But with this encouragement I said, "With the chance that you might resent it, there is something I'd like to say."

"I won't resent it," he said, "I'll be glad!" He obviously meant it.

"You are pretty well thought of around here," I said. "You do good work, and everybody knows it. I presume you like to get promoted once in a while."

"Yes," he said, "I do!"

"Well," I went on, "I'm going to suggest something that will help you get promoted more often. It may cost you about two hundred and fifty dollars, but it will be worth it."

He filled my pause with the question, "What is it?"

"Get yourself about three suits that will make you look like what you want to become—an executive. Then get all the accessories that go with them. Come to work every day dressed up as though you were headed for church."

After several minutes' conversation, he agreed it was a good idea.

"But what," he asked, "will people think? Such a sudden change will make them wonder what happened!"

"Let them wonder," I said. "That will add advertising value."

"Well, what if they kid me about it? What if they start asking questions?"

"Let them."

"But what will I say?"

"Don't say anything at all. Just make the change!"

During the following weeks, people commented on Duncan Campbell, many of them within my hearing. "For a few days," he said, "I was kidded unmercifully. It wasn't as bad, though, as the kidding I used to take when I dressed as I pleased. It was certainly a swell idea. People who used to ignore me talk to me now. As you said, I'm getting confidence where I didn't have it before. And I feel better about myself. I can see, now, that I was standing in my own light."

One day his boss stopped me in the hall. "By any chance," he asked, "did you have a conversation with Duncan Campbell several weeks ago?"

"What," I asked, "do you mean?"

"For several years," he said, "I've done everything possible to get that fellow to dress like an engineer. I've criticized, ridiculed, and threatened him. I even asked some of

the girls to make fun of him. Nothing did any good. Suddenly one day he walked in dressed for a wedding. He's been dressing that way ever since. It struck me that maybe you had something to do with it."

"Some things," I told him, "look pretty mysterious. Occasionally it's just as well to let them stay that way." He knew what I meant. Then I went on, "Has it done him any good?"

"Sure it has. I failed to sell that fellow into a couple of promotions because certain people wouldn't believe anybody who dressed that way could be a good engineer. But things are different now, and I've already had some success."

Then he added, "I guess you're right. The less we say about it the better."

From this illustration we can draw the obvious conclusion that it is easy to impede one's progress by negligence in dress. Such negligence sets the individual apart from his associates in a negative way. But when he conforms, he becomes "one of the crowd." He loses his status as an alien. By making himself seem like those with whom he works and lives, in dress as in other ways, he becomes socially acceptable. He awakens a feeling of oneness between himself and others and thus gains a sense of identity of interest with them. This breeds mutual trust, which makes it easier to eliminate or ignore many of the personality pettinesses that interfere with friendliness.

Thus it is obvious that a man can increase his own opportunities for popularity by appearing before his associates suitably dressed, in conformity with their standards. If he is careful about it, he can go beyond this. He can appear to be not necessarily as they are at the moment, but as they think they are, or as they would like to be. This takes advantage of people's natural inclinations toward hero worship, but it is a tricky thing to accomplish, because any tendency

to show one's belief in his own superiority naturally arouses negative reactions in others.

Qualities that are an extension of the admirable characteristics other people tend to desire for themselves furnish a compelling invitation to friendliness.

In effect, popularity is partly a measure of a person's ability to make himself appear in a somewhat glorified version of the very people whom he seeks to influence. These people see in him a picture of themselves at their imagined best. There is no easier way to put one's self in the glorified-version class than by one's manner of dress, which requires no "acting," no lofty assumption of superiority, to gain this result. All it takes is careful preparation worked out in advance.

The person who suddenly decides to spruce up his appearance usually doesn't know how to begin. Women are here more fortunate than men, since details of feminine grooming are described in the press and over the radio, shown in the movies and in fashion shows, and discussed in endless conversations. I shall by-pass a difficult job by restricting my comments to a few fundamentals on the subject of women's dress.

Your clothing should always be of pleasing getup. If it attracts unusual attention, which is not necessary in itself, that attention should be favorable. Unless it is, the more attention your apparel gets, the worse for you.

It is true that the shock of a really unusual appearance will make people stop and stare. But since tastes vary widely, it is difficult to dress in an extreme manner without arousing the disapproval of some people. As in many other matters, a middle-of-the-road course is safest. When you deviate from it, be sure that the effect of your apparel will be favorable on all those whom you desire to impress.

Assembling items of apparel into a symphony of color can be far more complicated for women than for men, because

of the greater variety of colors available in women's clothes. No woman can afford to remain unfamiliar with the color combinations that are always pleasing. To a man it is almost incomprehensible that some of these combinations can be as good as they are. The blending of lavender, purple, and blue, for example, or of blue and green, staggers the imagination, yet it can be done. Most women, however, get into trouble in attempting such blending.

There are women who will wear a blue dress with large white polka dots, then surmount it with a yellow sash. Once I saw one go beyond this, adding red shoes, yellow bobby socks, a shiny black handbag, and a green ribbon in her hair. Some other observations, however, have led me to be cautious about saying that such a combination cannot be attractive.

In preparing to write on this subject, I collected considerable data on colors. At first I was actuated by a desire to develop some sort of color chart that would guarantee effective combinations to any woman. But I wound up realizing that a book could be written on that topic alone, and that it would still have room for errors. All this has left me wondering how women do as well as they do. By way of explanation for daring to enter this feminine realm, I should remark that, although I am no stylist of women's clothes, I have discussed the subject of effective combinations with many men. And if there is any truth in the saying that women choose their clothes partly with an eye to masculine approval, there should be some value in the points made in these conversations. So here they are:

Blend or contrast your colors to get a pleasing effect in the mind of practically everybody you meet. Don't go in for combinations beyond ordinary understanding. The more complicated your color schemes become, the more likely they are to be considered queer.

Stay in the zones of safety by keeping your combinations simple enough so that you can understand them easily yourself. Use as few colors as possible to get the desired effect. Notice what is worn successfully by others having the same complexion and coloring as you have. Make sure that the prominent colors you wear will blend or contrast nicely with your own natural colors, especially the color of your eyes. Don't let any of the colors you wear clash with each other or with your eyes, hair, or complexion. And when you are tempted to go in for some combination that taxes your judgment, back away. Or, before adopting it, get reliable advice from somebody who knows, possibly the sales-woman. It's her job to know what colors go well together. Get her to explain. Then you'll soon be able to discover for yourself whether she knows what she is talking about. Besides, you'll gradually store up a supply of valuable information for future reference. And if you don't finally satisfy yourself that a certain combination is safe, just don't use it.

This consideration of color, it should be remembered, applies to anything you wear and to your make-up as well. Nail polish, if you use it, should not clash with your lipstick, and your accessories are all a part of the same general scheme. It will pay you, too, to give consideration to the settings in which your outfit will be worn, and even to the colors to be worn by your companions.

It is not the purpose of this book to say what should be done, said, or worn by the woman whose primary object is to single out an eligible male, cut him out of the herd, and then make him over into an acceptable mate. But one of the points I got from my conversations with men is that most of them like reasonable simplicity in women's dress. This is fortunate, for it is perhaps almost as easy on the pocketbook as it is on the judgment. But if you seek simplicity by sewing your own clothes, you had better be sure they escape that

homemade look. Let them appear to be casual, but in no sense careless. And don't wear too many accessories, too many ribbons, or too much jewelry, regardless of how precious they may be to you.

On the subject of budgets, my research disclosed that skimping on some important details often makes it impossible to create a good general effect. Where lack of funds dictates a careful approach, corner-cutting may be regarded as a necessary evil, but there are many women who occasionally give free rein to a natural tendency to splurge. A coat or a dress that exhausts their funds forces them to buy inexpensive accessories that cannot possibly be in keeping, with the result that the desired effect is lost. It is better not to be extravagant.

Wear the kind of clothes your life demands. Don't be swayed too much by what glamorous show girls and models wear, or by ads and fashion shows featuring cocktail dresses and exotic creations that belong in movies that depict strange situations and strange people—unless you are one of them yourself. Instead, dress to suit the occasion, and always to suit your type. It is good taste to look sporty or dressy when the occasion calls for it, but never adopt styles that are not suited to you. Remember that your type is rather rigidly fixed, at least in some respects, by such considerations as size, proportions, coloring, disposition, and age.

Recently I met a pudgy woman—of an age that can best be described as “older”—who strove to please her man by wearing a slinky cocktail dress, ballet slippers, and a shoulder-length hair-do. “My husband wishes I were eighteen and blonde,” she told me wryly, and left little doubt of her intention to go as far as possible toward eliminating the discrepancy in years. She is just as far from her type as the teen-age youngster whose upswept hair and overly sophisticated clothes make her seem younger than she is.

Even a plain Jane can make herself attractive. A good-looker can do wonders, and a real beauty can have practically everything her own way—as long as she follows the precepts laid down in this book. Care in dress will enable anybody to take a step up in the esteem of others, whereas lack of care will result in taking a step down. Most women, I believe, feel themselves to be very clever in selecting their clothes. No doubt most of them are. But the cleverest ones are those who know that if their decisions are rushed or ill-considered they can easily make mistakes.

Women have an abundance of advice from experts on style, but no equivalent service is performed for men.

From personal experience in selling men's suits, many years ago, I learned that very few men ever make an effective analysis of the fit of a new garment at the time of its purchase. Instead, they rely on the store, on the salesman, and on the tailor. Unfortunately, unless you have special reasons for confidence in those who serve you, this is often bad business. The store and its personnel are primarily interested in making sales.

So here are a few suggestions for men in their selection of a suit. There are only a few things that must be checked. Step in front of a full-length mirror, and see how the suit you are trying on measures up in relation to these details:

*Coat.* Does the collar fit snugly around your neck, without gapping on either side? Do the lapels lie evenly on each side of your necktie? Do the shoulders fit snugly, without being too tight, and do they match the contours of your own shoulders? Are the sleeves of proper and identical length? Is the length of your coat correct, and the same on both sides? Are there vertical or horizontal wrinkles down the back?

*Vest.* Are the buttonholes properly spaced in relation to the buttons? Is the line of buttons exactly vertical and in

the center? Does the vest overlap your trousers sufficiently so that no part of the shirt is visible during any ordinary movement? Does it lie flat over your chest and abdomen, without pulling tight? Does it show an equal amount of shirt on each side of your necktie? Is it loose enough around the waist not to bind when you sit down, and tight enough not to gap anywhere when you stand up?

*Trousers.* Do they feel comfortable around the waist, without being either too tight or too loose? Are they long enough to touch your shoes in front, possibly with a slight break in the crease below the knees? Are the legs of equal length? Are they of sufficient circumference to provide freedom of movement, without being baggy? Do they fit snugly under the crotch, without binding? Do they bag in the seat, or give you insufficient room to sit down in comfort?

These points are suggested to indicate the sort of detailed consideration you must always give to the selection of a new suit if you are to be certain of a really good fit. Do not skip any of them, unless you know you are in skilled hands and can fully rely on your tailor. But that is a word of admonition for future use. From a practical point of view, you are confronted with the wardrobe you now have. Analyze it in detail, and see how it measures up. If necessary, take your suits to a reputable tailor, and have them altered for style and fit.

Observe your acquaintances, and learn all you can about improving your appearance from those whose accomplishments in dress are highest. Observe color combinations, materials, styles. Occasionally look yourself over in your mirror. Decide whether you would have confidence in the fellow you see there. Notice whether your clothes are neatly pressed and whether they measure up to the high standard required by the life you live and the work you do. Study each detail

by itself, concentrating on one at a time, and determine how to improve its contribution to the whole.

Check also to make sure that you aren't one of those who dress too hurriedly. Get the habit of laying out the next day's apparel each night before you retire. Select harmonizing colors and see to it that each article of clothing will contribute to a pleasing and impressive whole.

If you have any difficulty with the problem of color combinations and would like to arrive at intelligent choices on short notice, here is a brief analysis to help you:

The two elements of color combination to consider are (1) gradations in tone, for instance blue and gray-blue; and (2) contrasts, for instance between the unlike colors of red, white, and blue. Harmony, an esthetically pleasing whole, can be achieved by either combination.

Any detailed analysis of suitable and unsuitable color combinations would be extremely difficult to work out, and also to remember. The more you learn about them, the safer you will be—and the greater will be your latitude of safe choices. But short of this knowledge, here is a simple procedure that, with good judgment, will guarantee ease of choice:

As a starting point, use some color to be found in yourself—one of the shades found in your skin (including your lips), your hair, and, particularly, your eyes. Look yourself over in the mirror. If you have never thought about it before, you will probably be very much surprised to find that a wide variety of colors marks your appearance. You will be safe in assuming that these colors harmonize effectively, since such harmony is a common occurrence in nature. Notice particularly the iris of your eye, from the pupil to the outer circumference. You will doubtless find that it includes such a range of colors in itself that, without further consideration, you will have a good variety for a starting point.

Simply by making sure that every garment you select closely matches some shade of color to be found in your eyes, your hair, or your skin, you will provide a sound basis for controlling the ultimate effect of your personal appearance.

Assuming that manufacturers achieve harmony in the garments they produce, a color scheme based on the garments will normally work out rather well. You can go beyond this, however, by "hooking" one garment to another. Suppose you select a necktie because its dominant color matches a shade that appears prominently in your eyes. If the tie contains contrasting colors, one of them may link up with your shirt and another with your suit. The dominant shade may be adopted for your socks. Or, beginning with a tweed suit of more than two colors—a suit that harmonizes with your general appearance—let each of your accessories pick up one of the colors to be found in it.

By either of these procedures, you rely on the ability of the manufacturers to work out pleasing combinations. This simplifies your own problem, which consists merely in matching colors, for which no specialized training is required. By looking over your wardrobe, you can find numerous combinations that can quickly be chosen on this basis.

But there are a few "don't's." Avoid wearing black shoes with brown socks, or a gray hat with a brown suit. Don't try to match green and blue. And don't try to match too many complicated patterns with one another. Choose a plain necktie to go with a flashy suit, or a flashy tie with a plain suit. And stick to what you know and understand in order to be safe.

With these guideposts, it becomes an easy matter to chart the color combinations for the garments that you habitually wear together and to learn what combinations should be avoided. By making such decisions at your leisure, you can establish a routine that precludes the necessity of solving

complicated color problems in a hurry when the need for haste makes it impossible to reason the whole thing out.

So examine critically each article of clothing you possess. Dispose of any article that shows you at a disadvantage. Make no additions to your wardrobe without profiting from the opportunity that a purchase provides to improve it. Remember that an essential in being well dressed is to avoid being conscious of your clothes. Create the appearance of having given the matter no particular study, yet set a high standard for yourself, and never fall below it.

Even though your work may seem to call for a rough-and-ready appearance, you can easily make yourself stand out from the crowd by improving your manner of dress. Forget about the cost. I have advised many people, including factory workers, to increase their investment in good personal appearance—with the result that most of them found it easier to get promoted into better-paying jobs. Their investment paid off.

Of equal importance to both men and women is the matter of grooming, and on this subject I am going to be blunt.

I am appalled by the number and character of the people who habitually carry dirt under their fingernails, let their hair get matted with dandruff or accumulating dirt, shave too seldom, wear frayed neckties or shirts that cannot be made tidy, go about in scuffed and unshined shoes, and have a general appearance indicating that a trip through a laundry and a tailor shop, and a series of careful ablutions would be needed to make them presentable. A good many of those people show every sign of being oblivious to their shortcoming—although I am talking about only the ones who have enough intelligence and experience that they should know better.

You cannot win friends at sight—at least, not discerning friends—unless you are fastidious. You should be sufficiently well groomed to impress even the most fastidious of the people you meet. If you want to get the most out of all your human dealings, nothing less will do.

The reason your personal appearance is so important is that it advertises you before the world. So does your house, inside and out, and the property that surrounds it; your office or shop or store; your automobile; and anything else identified in people's minds as your property or an extension of yourself in some other way. In this business of getting your personality across, do not neglect these outward and visible signs.

Thus appropriate dress exerts a helpful influence on the winning of friends—just as does abounding energy, mental and physical well-being, emotional stability, and a proud carriage. But possibly of greater influence than any of these is personal magnetism. This elusive but dynamic quality holds the power to capture, in a split second, interest and friendliness.

It is almost impossible to define personal magnetism. The dictionary definition of "personal attraction or charm" I find wholly inadequate—partly because it is too broad and partly because it fails utterly to describe the quality of magnetism. So I am going to tackle an explanation of it by indirection.

Walter Pidgeon is magnetic. That is the source of his great charm. His posture, every gesture, every facial expression conveys the impression of something going on inside him—perhaps a whimsical thought, a fond recollection, a pleasant anticipation, a plan to bestow an unusual favor.

So magnetism is an ebullient spirit, an overflowing kindly feeling, and a tumbling out of exuberant ideas.

You can pick the magnetic person out of a crowd anywhere. Doubtless everybody, at times, has this quality. You

will remember having seen examples of it when you read the following: A girl has just met the boy she intends to marry; a fellow-worker has just been promoted; a young mother gives a first anxious look at her healthy child; the father passes out cigars; a youthful writer has just sold his first story; a young husband and wife are surveying their brand-new home. All people are magnetic at moments of exaltation.

Here is another approach to an understanding of personal magnetism: Contrast the kid who expects to go to the ball game with one who doesn't expect to go; or compare the aspect of a man on the threshold of some great success with his aspect as it was six months earlier, when he was in the grip of expected failure. Under which circumstance would you expect a person to be magnetic?

*Sure, you say, I can be magnetic when fortune smiles on me. Anybody can at such a time.*

Well, what we are talking about is the outward expression of a state of mind, and it can be cultivated. It can be made a dynamic daily force. How?

Carry with you an expectation of happy events to come. Fortify yourself with a list of possible future accomplishments and triumphs. Let them stimulate your self-confidence and color your personality. It makes no difference whether these anticipated events are great or small in themselves, as long as they raise your spirits.

The same elevation of spirits can be gained by looking backward. Recall some pleasurable experiences, past achievements, and humorous occurrences, and occasionally funny stories to chuckle over. Few techniques will do more to relax your nerves and improve your disposition. They give sparkle to your countenance and to your entire personality.

You don't have to talk about these means to a desired end. Keep them to yourself. Just use them to refurbish your mental and emotional state.

Do not make the mistake, however, of imagining you can turn such magnetism on and off like an electric light. If your normal expression is dour and strained, some great event will be necessary to change it. If you try turning on your charm only occasionally, when you feel it is called for, the dead weight of your habitual performance will pull you down. Instead, habitually express some hint of emotional buoyancy, even when you are alone. This will turn the trick.

Another means of gaining magnetism lies in action. Haven't you noticed that personality is most effectively expressed by the individual who is in motion? By springing from apparent repose into activity because of some exciting emotional change, people become magnetic and attractive. So do something, say something, get excited, and put enthusiasm into your performance. Get that action into your conversations, too. Arouse the interest of your listeners. A new idea, or an old one couched in fresh phrases, will be magnetic in itself. Whatever your subject, whether light or serious, let it take possession of you. If your thoughts are wholly given over to it—and if self is forgotten—then you can be as magnetic as your words. But remember that conversational magnetism is often little more than the speaker's engrossment in the people who surround him.

It would be foolish to say that developing a quality of magnetism can be accomplished easily. Rarity and difficulty of accomplishment partly explain why it is so desirable to possess. But in order to develop it, you must truly want it. Persistent desire will lead you through the necessary steps. Keep trying.

## Chapter 9

### *Attracting Favorable Attention*

**T**HREE is another short cut to arousing a person's immediate friendliness: Just begin by finding ways to stimulate your own genuine high regard for *him*.

Look for the best in others. Be attracted to them at once. As a result you will like them better, like yourself better, and be happier. At the same time you will make yourself interesting to them. Let's see how this procedure works out.

One day Steve Benson resigned his job, even though the salary and opportunities for advancement were excellent. He left to accept another job, which he frankly admitted was not a better one. "But a friend of mine told me," he said, "that the people in this new place are easy to get along with. After working with that bunch of jerks in the old place, I sure hope so!"

"You'll find that they're just a bunch of jerks, too," I told him.

He asked, "How do you know?"

"Just work there a while, and find out for yourself," I said.

Steve's reply showed that he was losing a little of his confidence: "Well, I've been told they're all right!"

"Take it from me, they're not!"

Steve thought this over for a moment, then asked, "Where can I go?"

"No matter where you go, you'll still find a bunch of jerks."

Now Steve was an intelligent young man. If he hadn't been, I wouldn't have talked this way. In fact, he was smart enough to suspect something.

"Are you," he asked, "implying that there is something wrong with me?"

"Not necessarily," I replied, "but that fellow who told you about this good place to work has a valuable trick. He would even enjoy working with the people you are so anxious to leave."

"What is it?"

"He is a good-finder," I said. "He instinctively looks for the best in other people. Consequently he likes them, and they like him. The same jerks who rub you the wrong way make him happy and comfortable in their presence."

Steve was meditative for a moment. Presently he asked, "Do you think I should try to get back into the old place and see if I can get myself straightened out there?"

"It doesn't make any difference where you go," I told him. "One place is as good as another. Wherever you are, you now have a principle that works. Of course, in the old place, you would have to change a lot of habitual reactions, in other people as well as yourself. Somewhere else, you can start with a clean slate."

Steve took the new job. He found that his friend was right, after all. These people were agreeable to work with.

The fundamental point is that everybody has a good personality and a bad one—sort of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde combination. By appealing to a person's better nature, you will almost always find yourself dealing with it.

And the same is true in reverse: You can always justify your negative opinions of the people you meet, because you can readily find flaws in them. But if you do the opposite—if you try to discover what you can admire about them—you will automatically stimulate your own feelings of friendliness toward them. When you go further and put your favorable opinion of others on display, their reaction will be to recognize you as a good judge of people.

Some of my readers will say that there are plenty of people in whom no good can be found. If there are such members of the human race, I can only say that I have never met them. But I have met quite a few who are always able to pick out and emphasize people's flaws.

There is an apocryphal story about an old-time band leader who interrupted a rehearsal because his cornetist played a sour note. On the repeat, the error recurred. This happened again and again. Finally, exasperated, the old German conductor stepped down from his podium and pushed through the assemblage of musicians to the offender. "Show me dot score!" he said.

The cornetist complied.

After looking over, under, and through his thick spectacles, the conductor fixed an icy stare on his cornetist and said, "Dot iss a flyspeck, and I vant to tell you something. Hereafter—don't play the flyspecks!"

Isn't it true that many of us make the same mistake in our dealings with people? We play the flyspecks. But by playing the right notes only, our unfriendly thoughts toward others are dispelled, and at the same time, we tend to overcome negative personality traits in ourselves. Almost miraculously we arouse good feelings and the liking of other people.

If you suspect yourself of harboring unfriendly thoughts, try this: Get out pencil and paper, and write down at random the names of people you dislike. Then list, after each name,

several of the admirable qualities of that person. Forget all the things you have been thinking and saying about him that might offend him if he knew, and dwell only on his virtues. Even though it goes against the grain, give the devil his due. After you have finished, lodge a few of the points in your mind regarding each one, and decide to be influenced by them the next time you meet the person concerned.

This may seem like a bitter dose—picking out the people you particularly dislike for a specific campaign of friendliness. Well, the more bitter that dose appears, the worse you need to take it.

The person who arouses your disfavor provides an ideal opportunity for practice. In the first place, he will be hard to attract, because most likely he doesn't like you either. Probably he'd rather not touch you with the other end of a stick. In the second place, you will have to run against your inclinations in seeking to arouse his friendliness. For these reasons he will afford you ideal training and development.

So, in the presence of any person you dislike, begin at once to look for some quality you can admire. Examine his character, talk with him, dig beneath the surface deep enough to find reasons for being attracted to him. Then act on those reasons. Behave as though you *are* attracted, and the next thing you know there will be a feeling of friendliness between you. Your effort will kindle a light in your eye, an animated expression on your face, and a quickened imagination, which will supply you with helpful phrases to put sparkle into your conversation.

Almost always you will find, with better acquaintance, that your original impression of anyone you dislike was based on some unfortunate word or action that was not at all typical of the real person—perhaps on some superficial quality that altogether disguised him. People commonly make the

mistake of judging others by one or two isolated incidents, which may have little to do with the real character of the person judged. You can keep yourself from falling into this trap by cultivating the habit of finding worth-while qualities in every person you meet.

Have you ever seen two motorists approach each other after their cars have collided? Something in this situation seems to bring out the worst in human nature. Characteristically, each sets out to prove the other's deficiencies while ignoring his own. There is only one logical outcome of such an encounter, if it is allowed to run its full course. Anger mounts in rising crescendo until violence ensues. Such an encounter in Philadelphia (the city of brotherly love) ended only when one driver plunged a knife into the other.

From the moment you meet a new acquaintance, and throughout all your dealings with him, invitations to negative thinking can arise. Haven't you met the person who starts by "taking your measure," obviously considering you an adversary and seeking weaknesses and flaws in his first glance? Or later, when jealousy, conflict of interests, or some imagined slight arises, he starts looking for shortcomings that he can capitalize. Next thing you know, he is making derogatory remarks about you.

If you have occasionally looked somebody over with a baleful eye and subjected him to disparaging remarks behind his back, it will pay you to realize that your attitude is likely to hurt you at least as much as it hurts him. There are three reasons for this: (1) By emphasizing negative characteristics, you magnify them, you prevent yourself from seeing the good characteristics, you subject yourself to emotional damage, and destroy your ability to make the most of your relationship with the person whom you are disparaging. (2) You may be doing the victim of your remarks a complete injustice. When this is true, your listener is likely to know it,

and he will almost surely mark you down as a poor sport. (3) The person to whom you are talking will be inclined to think that you will make similar derogatory remarks about him in his absence—particularly if he has heard you tear down one person after another.

There is nothing to be gained in disparaging others. Injuring people's reputations is certain to work to your disadvantage in the end. Gossip may be fun, but not for its victims. So restrict your conversation to comments you would make to the other person's face. And don't let anybody get an idea that you are talking about him behind his back, or he will assume that whatever you say is to his detriment.

There is another advantage in good-finding: You judge the other person on his virtues rather than his faults. After all, it is the favorable qualities that determine his potential value to you, and by recognizing them, you will be in an ideal position to make the most of them.

Since there are many sour notes in practically anybody's disposition, you can produce only discordant music if you insist on reaching them. So reach the sweet notes and produce harmonious effects.

Besides, by keeping people's good qualities always in mind, and by letting it be obvious that you are doing so, you tempt them to remain on their best behavior. By emphasizing their virtues in your thinking, you lend a favorable aura to the atmosphere surrounding you. As a result you will have plenty of friends.

As a good-finder, you will also notice that your contacts with others result in an unending source of good cheer. Not only will you be more welcome wherever you go, but other people's reactions to your presence will tend in turn to lift your emotional level to new heights. You will feel better, and, because you do, it will become easier for you to make others

feel better also. The more you accomplish, the more you will be able to accomplish later on.

So think cheerful thoughts, say cheerful things, act cheerful, *be* cheerful!

Look through the clouds to their silver lining. Wear your rose-colored glasses. Walk with a light step. Read pleasant interpretations into every remark you hear. Be affirmative and positive in your point of view. Make yourself a source of pleasure to everybody you meet. Look for chances to make comments that will elevate their spirits. Make them feel lighthearted and gay. Tempt them to shed their burdens and forget their troubles. If you do these things, people will be glad of your presence. One of the easiest ways to increase your popularity is to radiate cheer wherever you go.

Back during the depression, I knew an up-and-coming young wholesale shoe salesman who seemed to be getting more than his share of whatever business was available. This Irishman, whom we shall call Mike McGinty, dealt with predominantly Jewish trade—proprietors of small stores in small towns. I asked if I could travel with him for two days, to watch him work.

His technique was unusual, to say the least. He entered each store in great haste and offered no greeting, even though the proprietor of each store was an old friend and customer of years' standing. Very seriously, he would begin, "I have only a few minutes today. I'm on my way to the Jewish convention in Atlantic City." Invariably the response was loud laughter. Then Mike would pull a shoebox from under his arm, hold it extended in one hand while he fondled it with the other, and almost whisper, with a profound expression of mock seriousness, "I have a little proposition for you—something that will make you *very* wealthy!" Invariably, again, loud laughter ensued. But from that point on, Mike was all business, at least until he approached the end of his

interview. Then out came another couple of wisecracks. Over and over again, customers turned to me to say, "We're always glad to see Mr. McGinty!"

I began to understand why Mike got so much business.

He covered his complete circuit about once a month. Before each trip he figured out a novel approach, one that could be repeated twelve times a day with equal effectiveness. During his first calls he would make adjustments in his method, adding to it or subtracting from it here and there. But once he got it worked out, he would make no more changes. He had found a formula that brought results. His customers got to know this, and the instant Mike entered the store, he had their complete attention. His story was always brief, and he always got it across.

I asked him, "Why do you, with your ability to sell, tie yourself down to small retail outlets?"

"Because," he said, "I've been working with these people a long time, and I like them."

Probably I did Mike's customers no favor by suggesting to him, "If you were to tie up with a manufacturer instead of a jobber, and so deal in larger quantities, you could sell shoes in tremendous volume to the big retailers. In New York City you can sell, in one transaction, to a buyer of a retail association representing dozens of department stores throughout the country. I'll bet that in a few years you could pile up a really sizable business for yourself."

Mike thought it over. "What works here," he said, "won't work there."

"No," I replied, "it won't. But you have figured out these owners of small stores, and no doubt you can figure out the big-time buyers, too."

Mike tried it. For many years now his powers of friendliness have worked in circles where figures are large. Mike's kind of friendliness works anywhere.

This business of attracting favorable attention by acting cheerful depends on a state of mind. It may seem difficult to cultivate—particularly if you have come upon a long succession of unhappy events. But just as nature indicates when you should eat by causing you to feel hungry, unhappiness indicates when you should give renewed attention to your state of mind.

Locating and correcting causes of unhappiness may be more complicated than satisfying physical hunger, because it is often difficult to associate each effect with its true cause. Besides, you may have acquired a deep-seated habit of pushing your troubles into the back of your mind and forgetting about them, so that it is hard to bring them out into the open. Unless you look squarely at your troubles, however, you cannot dispose of them realistically and systematically.

List, on paper, all the conditions that cause you unhappiness. Then work out ways to overcome each one by changing your habits of thought and action. Consider removing yourself from negative environments. Judge whether you should eliminate certain acts in favor of others. Establish goals that must be reached to satisfy your desires. Look for ways of counteracting negative emotions, and find constructive activities that will draw your attention away from them. See whether you can gain the compensating advantage of an emotional uplift resulting from duty well done or from effective self-discipline in the face of trouble. Seek sources of exhilaration, and set them opposite your sources of misery.

Such a list will impel your mind to be logical in the handling of your problems, and useful ideas will turn up. After you have thus dealt with each of your problems, you may find it surprisingly easy to remove most of them. But there may be stubborn ones that you cannot quickly dispose of. As for these, you might just as well make up your mind that you are going to be happy in spite of them.

If you can begin by *acting* cheerful, you will shortly find reasons for actually becoming cheerful. It sounds like putting the cart before the horse, but psychologists will tell you that astonishingly often cheerfulness may be obtained simply by such consistent inhospitality toward unfavorable reactions. You will discover that a smile and a pleasant attitude stemming from sheer determination will soon derive validity from your heart, and you will then be capable of making your most constructive human contacts.

Another short cut to the expression of good cheer is to be animated. The lively person attracts favorable attention wherever he goes largely because it is difficult for him to be lively without also being cheerful. He stimulates people and draws them out of themselves. He becomes a focal point of their interest, and as the source of their suddenly increased pleasure he increases his popularity.

I have heard and watched many famous symphony orchestras, yet invariably, when conversation turns to instrumental music, there arises in my mind an image of a little amateur group I heard in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, twenty years ago at the performance of a comic opera. The conductor of this orchestra was just about the most enthusiastic man I have ever seen. He clearly loved what he was doing. His whole anatomy expressed vibrant feeling. So intense was he that his personality inspired his orchestra. I have no doubt he is similarly remembered by others who were in his audience that evening.

Enthusiasm is a dynamic quality, able to capture attention anywhere. Moreover, it is contagious. It transmits itself, in some degree, to all observers, making them feel enthusiastic, too. It quickens their interest, makes their thinking more lucid, holds their attention, helps them absorb ideas, stimulates them to action.

Haven't you noticed that the person who shows enthusiasm in every word and act usually gets more attention than anyone else in sight?

Whether you are playing a game, making a speech, or introducing strangers to each other, let it be seen that you heartily enjoy whatever you are doing. Enthusiasm is a valuable personality asset. It may be developed in two ways:

1. Recognize that enthusiasm is a natural by-product of dynamic action. It may result from something you are doing or from something you are considering doing. It may spring from some remembered activity that you observed or participated in; or from anticipation promising pleasure to come. Haven't you noticed how enthusiasm suddenly wells up under such stimulation? Therefore intentionally engage in activities and thoughts that promote such reactions in yourself.

2. Instead of waiting for enthusiasm to possess you, act as if it were already yours. Simulate it regardless of your inner feelings, and it will mysteriously appear. So come alive, and astonish yourself and everyone else. By this means you can, in both business and personal pursuits, throw open the doors to opportunity and make a name for yourself. Try it, and see.

Sometimes, however, enthusiasm can lead one astray. Mark Ford was chief design engineer for a manufacturing company. He developed a reorganization plan that he believed would correct many interdepartmental troubles. But he was unable to get it accepted. Then he happened to read a magazine article on enthusiasm as an aid in putting ideas across.

The next time a group of the company executives had a meeting, he diverted their attention to his pet reorganization plan. Using the same old arguments that had failed to convince them before, he tried to bull his way through by

turning on more enthusiasm. Though no other speaker had risen from his chair, Mark got up and walked around the room. He pounded the table, shouted, ranted, and raved, and contorted his face into expressions of tremendous intensity. He embarrassed everyone present. He didn't win his point, because he had used enthusiasm as a substitute for sound planning, instead of using it as a supplement.

"I thought," said one of the executives afterward, "that he was going to explode."

Don't let enthusiasm be your only tool, or you may just appear ridiculous. Make sure your ideas are well aimed. See that they do not damage the interests and egos of people, but contribute instead to their welfare, happiness, and pleasure. In other words, use your enthusiasm as one of the tools for expressing your personality—but not the only one.

Try this drill: List ten reasons you now have for being enthusiastic and ten that you might create. As you turn each one over in your mind, build up its emotional importance to you. Then pick out several reasons that you might profitably recall wherever you go. Carry them around in your mind. Think about them frequently, chuckle over them, feel their importance. Let them kindle a light in your eye, a warmth in your heart, and a desire to share your buoyancy with others. Give yourself this treatment as often as you need it.

The purpose of the foregoing suggestions is to attract attention to yourself by producing a favorable impression on others. But it is wise not to let it be seen that you have planned this deliberately. If you do, there are plenty of people who will intentionally stand in the way of your progress. Unless they are just as ambitious for you as you are for yourself, some of them will look for ways of puncturing your hopes. So it is necessary to be subtle.

You can gain progress by becoming an example of the sort of person your friends and acquaintances admire. In-

crease your abilities and your virtues, but don't be arrogant about displaying them, and don't hide them either. Always let it be apparent that you value another person's good opinion. See to it that your efforts to improve his opinion of you do not in any way detract from his sense of his own importance. You can hedge against this danger by being cautious not to arouse his envy.

Supplement these efforts by an occasional project or enterprise that will display your virtues before others in creditable and attractive forms. Do not try to sell all your skills and abilities to everybody you meet. Instead, develop more aptitudes and talents. Increase your achievements, for they will earn you recognition and make you stand out. Observe the actions of other people who have achievements to their credit.

Do your practicing in private, where your failures will not be noticed. In public, let people observe those endeavors that will make the most favorable impression. And don't attempt to outshine anybody in the process. Be sensitive enough to recognize which of your accomplishments may rub the other person the wrong way, and avoid stressing them in his presence.

You can also attract favorable attention by displaying qualities that earn respect, but don't insist on getting all the recognition you think you deserve. Just put your energies into your performance. Then let nature take its course and you'll do all right in the end.

Sometimes you can manage to stage an extremely dramatic accomplishment that builds respect in a hurry. Charles Lindbergh did it. So did Gertrude Ederle. If the chances of doing this, even on a small scale, appear discouraging, remember that what you are seeking is valuable largely because it is difficult to obtain. You cannot demand respect; you have to earn it.

Perhaps an easier way to earn the respect of others is to show your respect for them. They will immediately credit you with good judgment. This is remarkably easy to do, because everybody you know, it can safely be assumed, is engaged in a constant effort to justify himself before the world. Contribute to this effort, and people will respond in kind.

Let your whole manner indicate respect for the other person's abilities and character, for his family and friends, and for his ideas, opinions, and pet vanities. Do not criticize the company he works for or minimize the value of anything on which he prides himself.

It is not always necessary to put your good opinion into words. Although that often helps, the idea will get across in any case, unless you are insincere. This gets across, too.

Insincerity is easily detected. It involves a risk you cannot afford. Don't act sincere—*be* sincere. No counterfeit will do.

When you find yourself in some situation calling for simulation, you can be sure that you have taken a wrong turn somewhere along the line. So analyze your motives. Determine whether or not they are honest. Don't go against your own better nature, but back away for a fresh start.

In addition to showing your respect for others, it is important to have a reasonably good opinion of your own virtues. Few people respect the individual who does not respect himself. So hold your head up before the world. Don't ever bow and scrape. Don't crawl. That kind of behavior is always despised.

We have talked of the danger that you may judge another person by some isolated example of unfortunate behavior on his part. But it is just as important to see that nobody judges you that way either, and that is what we shall discuss next.

The inexorable penalty of making a bad impression is loss of friendship and respect. Chances are that if you have given offense, you will have to take your punishment. You will have to start working your way up the ladder of friendship all over again. You may find it harder the second time than it was the first.

Of course, everybody is entitled to an occasional mistake, especially if it is a small one. But think ahead. Try to foresee the possibility of every mistake and head it off. Even seemingly trivial things are important. Make yourself sensitive to them. Remember, for example, that a polite person learns to yawn without showing it, whereas a diplomat learns not to yawn at all. At the other extreme, one single violation of good taste, one expression of bad judgment in one unguarded moment, can undermine the results of years of devotion to the building up of the favorable opinions others hold of you. Even an accumulation of little blunders over a period of time can result in a considerable weight of negative opinion. Make no mistake about it; that weight will hold you down. But you will be the last person to find it out. Even your best friends, as a rule, won't tell you.

Perhaps the worst situation you can face is the one that has a shattering effect on your own pride in the presence of others. You can avoid that sort of trouble by taking the precautions we have already discussed. But go beyond them. Think back to such situations in your own past. Learn your characteristic weaknesses and you will be forewarned. In addition, always be alert to detect little warning signs in the attitudes of other people toward you. When your precautions fail, be present-minded enough to analyze instantly what has gone wrong. Don't be downhearted about it, and don't feel called on to defend yourself unless you know you must. Especially, don't call attention to a shortcoming by a confused effort to cover it up. Usually you will be far bet-

ter off to shrug your shoulders and divert attention to some other subject of sufficient interest that your blunder will be forgotten. Go on as though nothing had happened. Begin at once to recapture your loss.

If you really want to be thorough about all this, make up a list of the things you habitually do that might make a bad impression. Don't expect to get all items included in one sitting. Some of those habits will be hard to disclose. After all, if you knew all about them you would have eliminated them long ago. Keep doggedly after them until you dig them out. Get the help of an honest friend who likes you well enough to be brutally frank. Then systematically work all those faults out of the structure of your daily conduct.

Eliminating faults, in itself, will not bring you favorable attention. It will only save you from unfavorable attention. But remember that the latter will inevitably have to be subtracted from the former. The remainder is all that you will have left, so it is good business to work from both ends. But no matter what virtues of daily conduct you finally achieve, they will avail you little unless you actually capture the notice of people.

To guarantee this, make sure that you are seen. Get into people's line of vision. Attract their eyes and thoughts. Ask them questions. Talk to them individually. Do things that can hardly escape their notice.

Jot down a list of the names of several persons you know who have more or less ignored you in the past. Then plan what you can say or do to arrest attention the next time you meet one of them—something that will make him aware of your existence. This is so important that you are justified in occasionally staging some remarkably dramatic performance involving considerable confusion, possibly even outright annoyance, as a means of making a lasting impression.

But you had better be sure to wind up with a friendly interest, and not ill feeling.

Spilling the contents of a brief case on the floor, upsetting a pile of papers, or some other performance that arouses sympathy may have effective results—especially if you are trying to get yourself remembered by somebody you have met only once or twice. When the need for such strong measures arises, it will pay you to work out something practical along these lines.

The nerve running from the eye to the brain is many times larger than the one leading from the ear. That may be one of the reasons why we usually remember the things we see so much longer than the things we hear. And what we see is usually more interesting and easier to absorb if it involves dramatic action. Use this knowledge in your efforts to attract people. Perform, show exhibits, give a demonstration. Capture attention, arouse curiosity, give pleasure and amusement.

Action produces constant change, and your personality will express itself most effectively in action because it permits you to show more sides of yourself, with greater variety, in the same length of time. Within reasonable limits, the more action the better.

Occasionally get up out of your chair and walk around. In some situation calling for exceptional enthusiasm, be dynamic. Put action into your voice, your conversation, and your physical movements. Look for chances to make effective demonstrations, rather than just to communicate your ideas in abstract words. This is a much underworked technique.

Here is a case in point:

Six-year-old Tommy Pratt did not know of the existence of such things as techniques for influencing people. He just behaved, or misbehaved, in his natural way.

Tommy was a little man of noise and action. Always he gave the impression of doing six things at once, and though

they were often not interesting in themselves, his way of doing them was.

When he pulled up the neighbor's shrubs, he made that act of vandalism look so attractive that several other boys joined in. When he threw toys out of the window of a little friend's second-floor playroom, he managed to beguile his friend's interest enough to bring about his enthusiastic participation in the destruction. Even when he was induced to perform some bit of useful work, children in the vicinity pitched in to help him.

"You always know where Tommy is," his mother would say.

"Yes," his father would add, "and you also know what he's doing."

Tommy got his personality across. He was always doing something and always putting plenty of action into it. Unconsciously he paraded all sides of his nature in the public view, and unconsciously he took advantage of the fact that action displays more personality than inaction.

Now that Tommy is grown up, that characteristic enables him always to stand out in a crowd. People notice him. Despite themselves, they watch whatever he does, and they form reasonably good evaluations of his performance. His virtues seldom wait long for recognition.

Occasionally this ability to gain attention by dynamic action becomes so spectacular as to constitute a badge of distinction, or a sort of trade-mark. Here is an example of that sort:

Two men sat in an anteroom, awaiting an appointment to talk with Martin Turner, a consulting engineer. Every few minutes somebody would stroll out through a door marked "Private," pass through the anteroom, and disappear toward a battery of elevators. Each time, the first of the two callers would ask, "Is that Martin Turner?"

The second one would always answer, "No!"

Presently the second man asked, "Do you see that hand-rail between us and the door?"

"Yes."

"Well, keep your eye on that," he said. "Soon you'll hear an explosion. The door marked 'Private' will almost fly off its hinges. If you're quick enough, you'll see the flash of a man's hand on that railing. The blur that vaults over it will be Martin Turner, but he will be gone by the time you realize it."

Almost instantly there was a burst of activity in the reception room. Then the first man realized that he had witnessed the dramatic event almost as described. He said, "I see what you mean!"

The second man chuckled. "Now you will understand me when I say that once you have heard a description of anything done by Martin Turner, you will always be able to pick him out of a crowd without even knowing what he looks like. That's how he works and lives!"

Without disparaging this man's engineering genius, it is reasonable to say that one of the things that has helped him build a lucrative practice is that he gets himself noticed.

Have you ever wondered why show girls, night-club performers, and actresses so often have many admirers? It is not always because of their beauty. When you see one of these girls on the street, she is often just another among many. It is not because they are in the public eye either, for any attractive young sylph entering or leaving a crowded church will catch many eyes. More than anything else, perhaps, it is because those girls are spectacular in action.

Of course, you can't attract attention at all, let alone favorable attention, if you are just another person among hundreds. So find some way to make yourself stand out from the crowd. Contrive various points of pleasing difference that

will set you apart. Consider your appearance, your words, and your behavior.

If you have never made an effort to figure out unusual things to do and say, a considerable amount of practice will be required before you develop effectiveness. You will be able to gain the spur-of-the-moment ability to be the cynosure of all eyes only through repeated exercise of your ingenuity on relatively unimportant occasions.

Think of people you know, and estimate what will arouse their favorable interest. When you get a good lead idea, try it out. Look for opportunities to experiment among your relatives and friends. When you find something that works, apply it to somebody else. When you fail, try to understand why. Make an alteration in your procedure. If this fails too, you will at least know what to avoid.

Remember that the way to be original is to escape the obvious same old hackneyed ideas and performances that come naturally to almost everybody. Strive to dig up new ideas. Give your ingenuity a workout at every opportunity. Stimulate its growth and development. You cannot expect to be noticed unless you offer something that is not offered by everyone else.

Raymond Stafford was again employed for the first time in over a year. During a long illness, he had lost out in promotions and advancement. So he wanted to catch up. He used the following technique to help get started.

Raymond was located at one of seventy-five desks in a large room. This was tantamount to becoming an anonymous member of the crowd. He decided that he just wouldn't be anonymous.

How would you go about attracting attention in the midst of such a collection of fellow workers? Raymond accomplished it without leaving his desk, almost without engaging in conversation with any co-worker. What he did helped

him in his work—because it stimulated him, increased his power of concentration, speeded up his work, and banished boredom.

He gave each detail of his duties profound attention. He concentrated on data and figures with a clear mind. He reacted emotionally as well as mentally to each problem he encountered. His own cognizance of the fact that he was doing his work well tended to improve his appearance. His changing facial expressions, varying from frowns of puzzlement to smiles of satisfaction, created the impression of an intense worker, vitally interested in his job, who was having the time of his life.

There was no grandstand play in his manner. On the contrary, he almost never looked at anybody. He was not putting on an act. He was doing the real thing, making himself more efficient, as well as making himself *look* so. He was smart enough to know that he would be observed at times least expected, and he made up his mind to be always prepared. He trained himself not to act the part but to perform it habitually—really to live it, and to forget about himself while doing so.

Anybody would put his best foot forward when he knows he is being observed, and anybody who does the observing would make allowances accordingly. But look at any large group of workers, and see how they conduct themselves when they think they are not being observed. You will probably conclude that it would be very easy to stand out.

At first Raymond's boss assumed that his new employee's intensity sprang from a desire to make good on the job, but after several weeks he began to wonder. At the end of three months, he was moved to inquire into Raymond's background, with the intention of finding out how he could use such outstanding interest more advantageously. So Raymond

gained advancement, which helped him make up for some of that lost time.

In addition to getting yourself noticed, it will often be possible to get yourself remembered favorably. Then you will not drop out of a person's mind as soon as you have left his sight. If he thinks of you occasionally, maybe he will pass some of his ideas about you along to his friends. Thus your reputation will be spread far afield.

Locate carefully selected ideas in the other person's mind. Make sure they will do you credit. Relate them to his vital interests, ambitions, and peculiar susceptibilities, and he will ponder your words and actions in days to come.

Show him a trick. Give him a little gadget. Promise to send him the name of a book. Cause him to anticipate the pleasure of hearing from you again. Give him a running line of thought, a humorous incident to chuckle over, or something else that will be remembered by him and remind him of you. If you are successful in this, his friendliness toward you will grow.

Jot down a list of such devices that you remember other people having used. Include outlines of curious incidents of happy outcome that you have recounted again and again with the intent to please—thus giving someone a bit of free advertising. This list will give you an index to what you can do. Then add examples of your own use of such devices in the past. Finally, plan several actions that you can try out on acquaintances. Select actions that you know they will pounce on with interest and later recall with delight.

Taken together, the techniques offered in this chapter will prove effective in gaining you favorable attention. Look for the best in others. Create a cheerful atmosphere. Display enthusiasm. Make a good impression. Let people see you in action. Get yourself remembered.

## Chapter 10

### *Doing Things People Appreciate*

LATE one bitter cold night, almost twenty-five years ago, my car went into a skid and ended up in a snowbank. Nothing I did would dislodge it. In subzero weather, out on a lonely stretch of open road, I faced the depressing prospect of devoting the night to vigorous exercise, simply to keep myself from freezing to death.

A car came in sight. It halted, and the driver got out. Together we accomplished what I could not do alone. Such was my gratitude, I could hardly think of anything to say.

"I don't see how I can possibly repay you," I told him, "for getting me out of this awful fix!"

Sensing my discomfort, the stranger made a comment I shall never forget:

"That will be easy. Just pass the favor along to somebody else who needs it sometime, and ask him to do the same. If you'll do that, I'll consider I've accomplished a good night's work." Then he disappeared into the dark.

Since then I have never passed along his favor without thinking how badly we need more people of his sort. But I have come to realize that his gesture was less altruistic than I at first supposed. Sooner or later, the chain of resulting benefits returns to the original benefactor. That happens in various ways.

An old and mysterious law of attraction says that any source of agreeable feeling tends at once to become an object of friendly regard and affection. You can make this law work in your favor by seeking chances to give happiness to others or to reduce their trials and burdens.

Isn't it true that your kindest feelings are directed to those who give you the greatest pleasure and satisfaction? You are drawn to them, sometimes even against your better judgment.

The strange thing about giving happiness is that it will produce even greater happiness in the giver than in the receiver. The more you give, the more you get in return; and the more you get, the more you transfer your happiness to others. Thus you set up a chain reaction, which promotes a sequence of dynamic stimuli.

My friend Jack Driscoll offers an example. He always seems to be thinking of others. He is sensitive to little opportunities for pleasing people, and figures out agreeable surprises. He runs a variety of possibilities through his mind and selects just the right one. Then his eyes light up, and he will say or do something friendly. He shows interest in the other person's welfare. He notices slight discomforts or inconveniences that he can correct. He passes along a compliment or a kind word. He chooses conversational topics that show a regard for the other person's special interests, or he diplomatically recalls some detail of a previous discussion to indicate that he considered it worth remembering. He tells a funny story, and gets a story in return to carry away. He lifts his listener out of the dumps and brightens his day. He sets people on top of the world. All this costs him little effort, because he makes a game of it. Besides, the good reactions he gets make him a beneficiary of his own performance.

How many people, do you think, receive enough pleasure? Look at individuals you see on the street, on trains, on streetcars, or in any public place, and try to answer that question. You will probably conclude that they are hungry for something to offset the humdrum of their daily existence.

You can assume that it is a long time since the other person has received a compliment, or since anyone has gone out of his way to provide him a spiritual uplift. Take advantage of whatever opportunity is offered to be the one to provide it.

Go out of your way to give pleasure to the people you hope to attract. Incorporate pleasure-giving into your habit structure so firmly that it becomes instinctive. From this will spring a philosophy of giving rather than getting.

Most of us think of courtesy as a minor social obligation. However, it is much more than that, since it includes going out of one's way to put people at their ease. Courtesy confers kindnesses that make life more pleasant.

The seemingly trivial personal desires of your superiors, your associates, your customers, your relatives, and your friends naturally mean a great deal more to them than to you. They are more conscious of them than you are. Yet these desires afford an always accessible avenue to the inner circles of their thoughts.

Pay attention to people's little wants. Favor their minor personal vanities. Give them comfort. Express pleasure over their good fortune. Gratify their small wishes. Go out of your way to perform acts of friendly consideration, right up to the point where people start taking advantage of you, and even a little further. By doing this, you make others dependent on you as one of their sources of happiness. Soon you discover that all you need to do to enlarge your circle of friends is to seize such opportunities as present themselves to minister to the wants and vanities of those whom you wish to bind closer to yourself.

It is easy to observe these opportunities when dealing with people in superior positions—for example, your boss, whom you are naturally eager to please and impress. Don't neglect such people, of course. But look also for chances to please those who consider themselves inferior to you. Here your behavior will prove more impressive because it is less expected. There is a precaution, however, that you would be wise to observe.

By doing something for somebody, whether his position is superior or inferior to your own, it is possible to make him believe that you are assuming an air of superiority. The person whose ego is easily damaged, and his number is legion, might respond by an instant surge of resentment. All of us, perhaps, have our touchy points in this respect. One of my best friends is a client who invariably refuses to let me hold his coat while he slips his arms into the sleeves, yet he has often insisted on rendering the same service to me. Apparently it does not please him to imagine that I consider him old enough to need help, which, incidentally, I certainly don't. At the same time it pleases him to be of assistance to me, even though my age is somewhat less than his. If any service you render seems to touch the other person in a delicate spot, you can usually counter the difficulty by conveying the impression that you derive greater pleasure than he does from the performance. But it had better be true.

In applying these procedures for improving your human relations, avoid any possibility of giving annoyance through overdesire to please. If you have difficulty in detecting this fault in yourself, it may prove helpful to think back over your past relationships and recall a few acquaintances who have displayed it. By considering your reactions to them, you will develop standards of comparison to aid you in keeping yourself within the bounds of acceptable conduct.

Joe Lindsey was a person who was overdesirous to please. From the moment he entered your presence, he behaved like an ardent swain courting the girl of his choice. If you looked as though you might want something, he tried to figure out what it could be. As soon as he thought he knew, he would thrust it on you. To avoid hurting *his* feelings, you accepted it regardless of *your* feelings.

He would interrupt your conversation to ask whether you were comfortable. He would give you health foods to prolong your life, and with them a lecture. He would make you take his umbrella, rubbers, and raincoat, if it looked like bad weather. He would run six yards to light your cigarette, even though you already held a lighted match in your hand. He would almost knock you down trying to clear your path of obstacles, or steer you around them, or open a door before you could get to it. And he would try to give such services to several people at once.

His intentions were of the finest. You would say that the world needed more unselfish, thoughtful people of his type, that he was the salt of the earth. But you would stay away from him, for he made you uncomfortable. You got enough of him in the first few minutes. The reason is that he worked a good thing to death.

Give only those services that you know will be wanted. Make conversation that you know will be gladly received. Do not inflict your good wishes, comments, or offers of assistance on the other person against his will. Make him happy by giving him what *he* wants, instead of expecting *him* to be happy over what is of primary interest to *you*. By arousing even a shadow of resentment, you cancel out whatever benefits might have accrued to either of you.

You can avoid resentment by contriving to get the other person to request assistance. Then you will be safe. Short of this, at least put him in a requesting frame of mind. Study

his point of view. Ask yourself whether any action you contemplate will contribute to his pleasure. If you feel it will, go ahead. Then observe whether there is any indication of irritation. If there is, you will learn from that what to avoid. In case this suggestion seems to magnify trivialities, remember that the ability to make yourself popular often depends on the successful handling of details.

In all your efforts to give people pleasure, inject an element of novelty. Put your contribution into the form of an agreeable surprise. Multiply the other person's emotions of pleasurable excitement by saying or doing what he doesn't expect. Use enough ingenuity to create an effective advance setting. There are three rules to be followed: (1) You must offer something that the other person wants, or that he would want if he had thought of it. (2) You must be in a position to furnish what you select, or at least have means of producing it. (3) You must bring the surprise about without tipping your full hand in advance, and at the same time it must be clear that you are responsible for it, but preferably without your calling attention too directly to the part you have played.

The effectiveness of an agreeable surprise can be increased by giving in advance a hint of what is coming. Often you can gain a double-barreled objective by first providing the expectation of pleasure. Say, "I'm going to tell you something you'll be awfully glad to hear," or "I'll show you how to do something that will solve a problem you've been worrying about." If you start with the main event, you deny both him and yourself the enjoyment of expectancy.

By contriving to promise your good deed or kind word for future delivery, you can arouse interest and suspense. You can stretch out a brief moment of glory into an extended period of tantalizing expectancy during which you are im-

portant in the other person's thoughts. This will get him into the habit of thinking of you pleasurabley.

So occasionally let him savor of expectancy. Get him to wondering. Provide him with the joy of anticipation as well as of realization. However, don't risk tiring his patience.

A less subtle way to spring an agreeable surprise, and certainly a direct one, is to make an outright gift of an article or service. A certain artists' agent is reputed to have attracted motion-picture stars by giving them lavish parties and by sending them gifts. You can't impress high-salaried stars with bags of potato chips, so his presents were expensive. Despite his obvious motives, his method worked.

Maybe you can't afford to give costly television sets to all the people you seek to attract, but a gift of small value often does wonders—even when it is only the gift of thoughtful attention. Selecting an inexpensive and appropriate gift will tax your ingenuity rather than your pocketbook. It is usually easier to work your way into people's esteem by other means than by costly presents.

The insurance agent who sends you a birthday greeting is obviously making a bid for your patronage, but nevertheless, don't you feel a mild surge of warmth on receiving his greeting? By sending a card or, particularly, a personal note, on anniversaries or for the observance of an unusual event not conventionally considered as an occasion for greetings, you can be sure of appreciation.

Nearly everybody you know has recently chalked up some achievement of which he is proud, but does it impress others? Usually it doesn't. Even when his hunger for appreciation is so intense that he almost pleads for notice, most of his friends will either ignore his desire for it or cut him off with a disinterested shrug. Knowledge of this fact should provide you with opportunities to be the outstanding person who steps forward to satisfy people's craving for notice.

Simply sending a congratulatory card or letter on someone's success will be effective, but suppose you write that congratulatory letter to his boss, his wife, or some other person concerned with his happiness or progress? Possibly you would then stand out in his mind for many years as the only one of his friends who ever did him such a favor. You would have only a small price to pay for the privilege of making a lasting impression of this kind.

Who among your friends has been responsible for a noteworthy accomplishment that deserves recognition? Who has bestowed a favor that warrants a gift, a card, or perhaps a commendatory letter addressed to some third person who might be able to advance *his* welfare? If you come upon some idea worthy of use, act on it! Don't put it off!

No great imagination is required for you to see the advantage, in any program aimed at expanded popularity, of doing things people appreciate. But here is something that will be harder, at first, to understand:

Bringing about agreeable surprises will get you favorable attention, but protecting people against unpleasant surprises is a seemingly thankless task. You can expect no particular recognition for preventing unpleasant surprises unless you acknowledge yourself to be the agent through whom such protection was given, in which case you will inevitably minimize whatever advantage might accrue to you. If you know that your beneficiary will never learn of your service, apparently you will have gained nothing except personal satisfaction. But nevertheless, the habit of performing such favors is one of the things that will help to make you popular.

To begin with, you will have demonstrated to yourself that you possess the capacity for friendships free from selfish motive. That will mark you, in your own mind at least, as an exceptionally social person. But the matter goes a good deal deeper than that, for what you know about your-

self will inevitably color the way you appear to others. Not everybody realizes that a reasonable habit of thankless consideration is one of the essential ingredients of a state of mind that makes universal friendliness possible. That state of mind will show in a good many ways—perhaps most of them indefinable—when you least suspect it. There is only one way to get it: Live by the procedures that will support it.

It is easy to make a good impression by showing sympathy for others' tribulations in time of need. Of course, it is not hard to feel sympathetic, but it is often difficult to express such feelings at the right time. It will pay you to plan appropriate comments just as carefully as you would prepare a formal speech.

It is not necessary, however, to wait until some tragedy has struck. Life's little troubles often add up to a disastrous total. Most of us feel abused and frustrated, in one way or another, perhaps most of the time. Our troubles are unspectacular, so we do not get the sympathy we need. But whoever helps to assuage them makes a favorable impression on us.

Take advantage of this knowledge by performing modest acts of friendly consideration for the person who feels himself in trouble. Make your sympathy constructive. Include words of encouragement and specific suggestions for overcoming difficulties. On occasion, lend a hand.

At the same time, be sure you do not intrude where you are not wanted. Avoid preaching or giving unwelcome advice, and don't substitute pity for understanding and help. Guard against becoming a busybody. Make sure you actually do improve your relations with others.

Seeking sympathy, on the other hand, will most likely only annoy people. The other person may be worrying about his digestion, his nagging wife, his frustrated ambitions, his income tax. He is too self-centered to pile your worries on

top of his own. Promiscuously inflicting your burdens on others will soon add a lack of friends to the list of reasons why you need sympathy. So don't pity yourself, especially not audibly. Above all, don't try to get somebody else to help you. Instead, correct whatever trouble you have. Get interested in a constructive task, and your need for sympathy will dry up.

An occasional person with exceptional insight will have an active desire to help you work your way out of trouble and will consider it a favor if you permit him to assist you. You may thus contribute to his happiness. But if you cannot attract sympathy without demanding it, you had better get along without it.

The techniques described in this chapter are almost certain to get good results. So why not draw up a list of those relatives, acquaintances, and close friends with whom you wish to improve your relations? Don't confine the list to people who can benefit you, or ulterior motives will become too important.

For each of the persons on your list, make the following analysis: (1) Ask yourself what personal interest, desire, or pet ambition or vanity he has that will offer a suitable approach. Jot down one or two key ideas before going on with the next step. (2) Ask yourself what you can say or do to please him by showing that you are aware of his wishes. Again, jot down two or three key ideas before proceeding. (3) Find some way of assisting him in one or more of the interests or desires you have selected for consideration. Again, push your imagination hard enough to produce two or three practical ideas. (4) From among the data you have accumulated for each person on your list, select a plan of action that uses the best ideas you have developed. Then act on it.

This procedure will do wonders in making you alert to possibilities for doing things people appreciate. It will lay the foundation for habits that will tend to make such acts instinctive, and you will be relieved of the necessity of conscious planning. You will find yourself applying such techniques almost automatically.

While reading about these procedures for making a good impression and contributing to others' happiness, you may have been thinking that it would be more interesting if you could surround yourself with people who display a desire to please you.

One way to get that kind of environment is to be a rich old man who drops hints about his will. Another way is to compel your employees to gratify your personal whims. They will readily comply if they have wives and children and cannot afford to lose their jobs. But if you wish to be surrounded by people who have the inclination to please you without compulsion, simply take the initiative yourself. Give what you hope to receive.

If there is one fundamental fact that underlies all phases of popularity, and particularly of our ability to make other people like us, it is that we usually get the same kind of treatment that we give.

Smile, as we have already said, and you will get a smile in return. Be friendly, and you will attract friendliness. Improve your position in the esteem of others, and they will avoid injuring you or your feelings. They will try to please you in as many ways as they can.

Not everybody you meet will live by the principles expounded in this book. There are people who will push you, step on your toes, and take advantage of you. But do not get angry with them. The fact that such people exist simply lends emphasis to the importance of doing your part well.

Besides, they reduce your competition and show how easily you can stand out as a shining example.

Somewhere I have run across the quotation, "Practice the amenities of life instead of the asperities." This precept sums up procedures for good human relations. By living up to it, you can induce people to want to be in your presence and to share in your activities. So do not condemn people. Allow for their shortcomings, confront them with examples of good behavior, and win their friendliness. Then you will be in a position to influence them.

All these observations resolve themselves into practical applications of the Golden Rule. Everybody applauds this standard of conduct, but having done so, a great majority of people then dismiss it from their thoughts. Do not make that mistake. Practice, don't merely preach, the rule of doing to others as you would have them do to you.

This may seem to you an unselfish approach to dealing with people. There is no reason why you should not evaluate it as such if you choose. But there are also good selfish reasons for adopting the Golden Rule, for if you can induce yourself to think in terms of giving, getting will take care of itself. Those who make themselves useful to others consistently, over a long period of time, enrich their own lives. So constantly look for ways to benefit others. Be a giver, rather than a demander, of service. Be unobtrusive about it, and do not call attention to your largess, for the less you expect a reward, the more surely it will come.

On the other hand, when somebody goes out of his way to save *you* trouble or give *you* pleasure, he usually deserves and expects a measure of reward. Deny him this, and you may deny yourself a repeat performance on his part. Avoid acting as though his act was insufficient or overdue. Express your thanks. Make him a reward of greater worth than his effort.

Maybe his sole object was to earn your appreciation. Give it to him. After all, the other person has just as much reason for improving his personal associations as you have for improving yours.

If your showing of genuine appreciation when he logically expects it will work to your advantage, it might work to your greater advantage when you tender appreciation unexpectedly. Then it will take the form of a surprise bonus. It will set him to wondering why you feel that he deserves it. It will heighten his interest in you, put pleasurable thoughts regarding yourself into his mind, and make you figure more prominently in his thoughts. So don't wait until somebody intentionally does something to make himself agreeable or useful, but show appreciation for some benefit he has given you inadvertently. That will give him his biggest kick.

This is another procedure to try on several persons whom you do not particularly like. Even your worst enemy has good qualities, and performs good deeds. If you look, you are certain to find at least some of them. Tell him about them. Get your appreciation across. Somehow, in this process, he is likely to cease being your enemy, in which case you will have gained another friend.

When you show appreciation, especially to somebody whom you dislike, there must be a real basis for your feeling. If your feeling is not genuine, you will be guilty of insincerity, and your hoped-for miraculous results will not materialize. Exert ingenuity to find a cause for appreciation, work it out in your mind in detail, and then give expression to the emotions you feel. In this way you will make a good impression.

Earlier in this chapter I commented on the fact that giving pleasure to another person contributes to the emotional welfare of the giver. Since this truth is applicable to all peo-

ple, one of the easiest ways to increase another person's happiness is to convince him that he has given pleasure to you.

At first glance this seems to indicate that the other person must have the initiative, and start the chain of events by doing something to give you pleasure. Of course, when he has just gone out of his way to do this, you have an obvious invitation to show your appreciation. But if you wait for such a situation to arise, you deny yourself many of your best opportunities to use the technique we are discussing.

Pleasure is often most intense when it comes at unexpected times and from unexpected sources. So look for those occasions when the other person gives you pleasure without trying to do so. These will be your golden opportunities.

Try over these introductory clauses in your mind: "What I like about you is . . ." "You made me very happy when you . . ." "It gave me a great deal of pleasure when you . . ." Such beginnings will get attention, and if followed by evidence will lead to gratification.

Try enough of these, in practice, to show that you understand the use of this technique. Go to the person who has given you pleasure, and tell him about it directly. Or describe it to somebody else in his presence. Or entrust the story to a third person—one who can be relied on to carry it back to the person who gave you pleasure. You will thus help cement your friendships.

As a basis for a consideration of the next point, make up a list of the names of the ten individuals who are most important to you, without regard to the reasons for that importance. Place on that list the names of those people whom you would most like to retain as friends if you were suddenly made to realize that you could have exactly ten friends and no more. Then analyze the reasons why these people are so important to you.

Among these reasons you will find numerous illustrations of the principles discussed in this book. For example, a person may be important to you because you like his looks, his personality, his conversation, or his standards of conduct, or because you and he have common interests and experiences and ambitions that draw you together. Or it may be that he is in a position to furnish you with assistance, ideas, and opportunities that are important to your progress and welfare.

Then ask yourself this question: Am I as important to each of these persons as he is to me? Use this as the basis of another analysis, in which you attempt to isolate the reasons why these people are attracted to you. Be as fair as you can. To be objective, it may help you to ask yourself how the other person would rate you, or possibly to wonder what rating would be given by a disinterested third person who is intimately acquainted with the facts of the association that exists between you two.

While making these analyses, you will doubtless pick up a number of attractive lead ideas for making yourself more important to some of the people on your list. Those ways that have worked with one, you might apply to others. You might also adopt procedures that, consciously or otherwise, your friends have successfully applied to you. Use these ideas as the basis of another analysis, in which you list chances to improve your relations with each of the ten people.

Remember that the process of creating friendship largely consists in giving the other person something that he wants, which makes you important to him. You train him to look to you as a source of pleasure, satisfaction, spiritual uplift, assistance, and cooperation. If you really learn to offer the benefits of personal association, you will be popular among those whom you benefit. So go out of your way to make your associations valuable to all the people with whom you asso-

ciate. Avoid being unctuous about it. Don't place people under obligation to you, but furnish them with advantages they would not want to see cut off.

Such action will bring you closer and closer to more and more people. It will solidify old friendships and pave your way for new ones. It will break down personality barriers and bring about a more general use of first names. It is wise, however, to avoid premature steps. Be sure your actions will not be resented.

I once watched an otherwise clever young man repeatedly make the mistake of taking premature action. Frank Baker felt that it placed him in a position of inferiority to use "Mr." as a form of address. So, immediately on getting acquainted with someone, he would ask, "What's your first name?" From that time on, he would use it. Once, when the other person displayed a sudden bristling of resentment, I heard Frank explain with some heat, "You don't have to get huffy about it. I just wanted to know what I'm going to call you!" As a consequence he started many of his new associations under a handicap. He was therefore compelled to work his way into a state of friendliness that he could just as easily have stimulated and protected at the outset.

Be careful to avoid overfamiliarity. There will be many who, though they take pains to conceal it, regard familiarity as an intrusion on their privacy. Before addressing someone by his first name, make sure that there exists sufficient friendliness to warrant it.

If your age, position, and importance are relatively equivalent to the other person's, and you know he knows it, and if your relations are cordial, you will be safe in approaching the matter directly. Say, "Why don't we call each other by our first names?" But don't do it too soon with the person who is overly reticent about extending his friendliness to others.

Another easy way to get started, if you have the other person sized up properly, is to invite him to take the first step himself. Say that your friends call you "Bill," or "Bob," or whatever your name is, implying that you will consider it a favor if he does likewise. If he bridles, recognize that he is probably fearful of your intention to use his first name also. But if he shows no resentment, ask what *his* friends call *him*. Again, if he throws up his guard, watch out.

Do not let any resistance on his part become a barrier to friendliness. There are many ways of breaking down people's reserve.

Consider whether you have been stimulated to too quick action by any sense of personal inferiority. If so, decide that you will change your attitude. Do this by giving the word "Mr." its proper dignity. Say it as though you meant it. With the right inflection, it can be used as a key to friendship and mutual respect.

Assist yourself by realizing that the other person may have feelings of inferiority also, and that he addresses you as "Mr." for that reason.

Possibly you can help overcome your sense of inferiority by creating an impression that you are unwilling to call the other person by his first name until he has earned that favor. Under the protection of such an attitude, your slowness to adopt first-name familiarity will allow you and the new acquaintance to test out each other's personal qualities before taking a step that might be regretted. Remember that the use of first names is more of a privilege, and has greater meaning, when it is not treated as a triviality. But don't let such reticence interfere with your other expressions of friendliness.

With an older person it is usually wise to get explicit permission before calling him by his first name. But short

of asking directly for his permission, there are maneuvers that are likely to gain you the privilege.

Devise some harmless test to determine whether the other person will be satisfied to have you address him familiarly. Tell a story in which you refer to yourself by your first name, or by your last name if you think that is what he would prefer. Or use his first name by mentioning it in conversation with somebody else, in a friendly manner, within his hearing, and notice his reaction. Put something complimentary into your remarks that will tend to neutralize any resentment he may feel, but be sensitive to resentment if it is shown.

When you are particularly impressed with the other person's importance, consider calling him by his first two initials, or select some convenient nickname such as "Chief," "Professor," "Uncle Tom," or something else you feel sure will please him. Use imagination in making your selection, and be sure that your expression carries no hint of derision. Remember that it is usually the person in a superior position who can do you the most damage. If you act without care, you may make a bad impression that is hard to overcome.

Many people make the mistake of attempting to build themselves up in the eyes of bystanders through the device of calling important people by their first names or by their nicknames. Such a procedure will frequently capture the interest of one person at the expense of another who matters more. When this happens, your net result is a loss.

The use of nicknames, even in a less flamboyant manner, is likely to be tricky and dangerous. It frequently invites resentment, partly because it suggests an even greater degree of familiarity than the use of the first name, and partly because so many nicknames are secretly hated. A good rule is to avoid any nickname you would resent in the other person's place, even though it is in common use. More important still, never set yourself apart in anybody's mind as the inventor of

an uncomplimentary nickname. The more firmly it takes hold and becomes a vogue, the more likely you are to be remembered with distaste.

To call a man by his surname without the title of "Mr." is a little different, because in some parts of the country this is almost a standard form of address. A generation ago this was common usage, but it is less prevalent now. Even in those circles where it is usual, however, there are many who do not like it. Some regard it as an indication that the speaker feels he is addressing an inferior person. So be sure of your ground. Most of your acquaintances probably prefer to have "Mr." prefixed to their names until you get on a first-name basis with them.

There are still many people who resent bold assumptions of familiarity such as the promiscuous use of first names on practically first sight implies. If you want to get on the right side of these people, you had better be cautious.

By way of contrast, here are some additional points of view:

During my first few years of teaching, most of my students were considerably more mature than I. It was not unusual for me to have a class in which I, the instructor, was the youngest person present. Because I was sensitive about my age and wanted to be considered older than I was, it pleased me that the students consistently used the title "Mr." in addressing me. It pleased me not because I felt superior but rather because I wished to minimize certain feelings of inferiority I then suffered. So, as a protective measure, I made it a point always to use "Mr." in addressing my students. As a consequence they treated me with the same formality, the same lack of familiarity, that I accorded them. I did not then realize my loss.

Gradually I began to suspect that the use of first names would offer an ideal basis for practice in social and business

conversation. I screwed up my courage to do a complete about-face.

Thereafter I began each new course by making remarks that ran about like this: "During the next few weeks we are going to become good friends. As we get to know one another better, the use of first names will become very general within this group. Even though some of us may be reluctant about risking excessive familiarity, it seems to me that we could avoid a certain stuffiness by anticipating the future. Why don't we begin to use first names tonight, since we shall be doing it soon anyhow? My friends call me "Dick," and since you are going to be my friends you might as well do the same. As rapidly as I learn your first names, if you have no objection, I'll begin using them."

During the years when this was a routine part of each beginning session, I noticed signs of resentment only once or twice. These I handled by somewhat pointedly (and also respectfully) addressing those individuals with complete formality. Always, the reversal of their attitudes was quick and complete. So I have never been sorry about having introduced that procedure.

I recall that during my childhood, a policeman, a Sunday school teacher, an uncle, and a neighbor—all of them well past thirty—which to a child seems very mature—actually invited the boys and girls they knew to use their first names. "You might as well call me Fred," said the policeman, "the same as everybody else does." We considered it an honor and a privilege to be allowed to call these four men by their first names. None of us took undue advantage of the opportunity for familiarity. We esteemed and idolized the grown men who thus invited association on terms of equality. Perhaps such friendliness should be invited more generally. Try it if you want to endear yourself to a group of children. They'll remember you favorably all their lives.

## Chapter 11

### *Stimulating Personal Interest*

A SPEAKER was invited to make a sales promotion talk before a group of automobile salesmen. It was a morning meeting. Everybody seemed sleepy and uninterested.

Then the speaker casually mentioned that he knew somebody who was going to buy a new car that same day. The buyer's name and address, he said, would be given to the one who could furnish the best answers to a series of questions he proposed to ask.

The change in that group was electrifying, for new cars were mighty hard to sell.

Something had been offered that everybody wanted. The speaker touched on the selfish interests of every man in the room. He got immediate attention.

The one person in the world in whom you are most interested is yourself. That is a universal human trait.

People spend much of their time thinking about themselves—about their hopes, fears, and private affairs. So don't expect the other person to think intensively about you, unless you give him special reasons. Until you offer something that arouses his interest, you will seldom be anything more than a spot on the horizon of his thoughts—if that.

But while you should not *expect* the other person to be interested in you, you can develop his interest. An easy way is to share with him his interest in himself. Practice focusing

your attention on subjects that concern him rather than on those that concern you. Impress him with the intensity of your observation. Let your thoughtfulness for him show in the expression of your face. In looking at him and talking to him, give him the same kind of concentration you would display if you were listening for the faint sound of music in the distance.

It is difficult to cultivate this habit. Remember the last time you looked at a group photograph including yourself? Did your eye instinctively travel first to your own image? Have you not frequently observed that people almost always do this? But you can train yourself to think of others first.

Consider everyone you know as an individual person, and concern yourself with his welfare. Get interested in his family, his hobbies, his golf score, his possessions, his opinions and ideas, his troubles and fears, his hopes and ambitions, his job, his achievements—any of his problems that it gives him pleasure to discuss. Inform yourself about him both directly and indirectly—through conversation with him and with others. Remember, however, that practically everybody's areas of concern are so extensive and complicated that you cannot expect to know all of them, even in the case of someone living in the same house with you. Pick out those topics that you can handle effectively, for they will not only make it possible for you to do him favors but will also be the basis for a common language between you. If you are able to become sufficiently personal, he might even reveal to you those interests that he generally conceals from the world as a whole. But you will have to be careful not to abuse such knowledge by spreading it around or treating it lightly. Otherwise you will find yourself suddenly pushed out again.

Your ability to develop this personal-interest type of relationship with a number of people will increase your circle of intimate friends—the kind who would probably name you

at the top of their list of "best" friends. Be careful in deciding whom you will select for such treatment, because these same people will inevitably become *your* best friends, and there is a limit to the size of the intimate circle for which you will have time.

This probing of areas of special concern is also valuable in helping you to find a community of interests with a stranger. Every salesman knows that it is easier to get a satisfactory interview if, early in the discussion, he can indulge in a bit of personal chitchat. After a friendly conversation about fishing or golf, his prospective customer will be in a friendlier frame of mind. It will then become harder for the prospect to duck the sales talk that follows, and perhaps harder also to turn down the proposal that the salesman has come to present. Such technique has undoubtedly been responsible for landing many an order.

Here, however, is the story of a man who overplayed his hand.

In his effort to sell commercial lighting equipment, Norman Paine finally succeeded in trailing the chief executive of an expanding company to his summer cottage at the seashore. Mr. Murdoch was the one man who could say yes or no about each major item of equipment for his new plant. So Norman congratulated himself on getting this inside track. *I'll talk to him about his hobbies, he mused, until we get real chummy, and then I'll give him my pitch.*

One of Mr. Murdoch's hobbies was obvious. Moored at his private landing was a sleek new cabin cruiser. *Boats, thought Norman, will be it!*

Mr. Murdoch himself came to the door. Norman introduced himself. Then, abruptly, he said, "I certainly like that boat. How long is it?"

"Forty-two feet."

"How fast will it go?"

"Twenty-eight knots."

This went on through a series of questions. Then Mr. Murdoch dropped his head in thought. Presently he glanced up through his eyebrows at Norman with a shrewd glint and asked, "Are you really interested in boats?"

"You bet I am!"

"Well, let me show you something. Take a walk down to the dock. Let's get on board."

Norman wondered how long this would take. His next appointment was only two hours away. But by this time they were on the boat, and Mr. Murdoch was saying, "I'll just cast off, and we'll take a little spin. Can you handle that rope?"

Fifteen minutes later, the cabin cruiser was still chugging away from that landing. *Gosh, thought Norman, and I left my keys in the car!*

They sailed more than two hours, constantly talking about boats. Mr. Murdoch seemed to be unburdening himself of a suppressed desire long pent up. Norman wondered how he would explain his absence to the man with whom he had an appointment. Then he noticed that Mr. Murdoch was approaching an island. After fastening his boat to the landing, Mr. Murdoch suggested, "Let's get off and walk around."

They approached a frame cottage tucked away among the trees. "I have a nice little shack here, stocked with food," said Mr. Murdoch. "We can sit around and talk boats for several days!"

They did.

Meanwhile, Norman's wife wondered where he was. He wondered where she was, too, and whether she would still be at home when he got there. He also wondered who was driving his car.

At the end of the third day, Norman had sold several thousand dollars' worth of lighting equipment. "But don't think you fooled me with that old dodge," said Mr. Murdoch, "because I used to use it myself thirty years ago. I just thought I'd find out how much you really knew about boats, and I did. Nothing! Now you know a good bit more than nothing. You earned your sale, too!"

Just a lonely old codger with a hobby, and nobody to talk to!

Driving home to his wife, Norman Paine did a lot of thinking. *The old technique works*, he told himself bitterly, *maybe a little too well. After this I'm going to be careful how I use it.*

The technique of talking to the other person in terms of his interests is repeatedly used by many people. Especially, it is often used by the person who seeks to gratify some ulterior motive, and then it is shallow and transparent.

It is easy, however, to be subtle about it. After having acquired a knowledge of the other person's special interests, find out which of them, if any, you share. A common interest provides a sound footing and makes it possible for you to be genuine about your efforts. A counterfeit interest—in photography, for example—is less likely to produce a favorable reaction, for it will almost immediately become obvious that you have no real knowledge of the subject.

On occasion, when your objective is sufficiently important, it may be worth while for you to engage in some sport, study, or other activity that holds rich meaning for the other person, even if you must go out of your way to develop this new interest in order to accomplish your purpose. By informing yourself sufficiently, over a period of time, you may develop the basis for a common interest; and, if you succeed in making yourself really at home in it, you may get an eminently satisfactory result. You will certainly not be seek-

ing entrance to somebody's good graces by overenthusiastic representations of a personal interest that you do not have.

Another practical technique is to find a relationship between one of the interests of the other person and a comparable interest of your own. You can compare the joys of fishing (his hobby) with those of gunning (your hobby), or you can contrast the pitfalls in your business with the security of his business.

Contrast is likely to provide as good a foundation for friendliness as comparison, for picking out differences can be as interesting as discussing similarities. And if you use contrast as your source of conversational fuel, the chances are that both you and your listener will be learning more, by opening new intellectual territory, than would otherwise be the case. The important thing is to find two interests—one yours and one the other person's—that can be brought together to bridge the gap between you and him. You can do it either by emphasis on similarities or by emphasis on contrasts.

Practice finding such relationships between the special interests that you have and those that others have. You will be surprised to discover how often they exist, even though you may never have observed them before.

People may be *thrown* together by their work or other activities, but they are most often *drawn* together by the strong uniting force of similar ideas, opinions, habits, and, especially, ambitions and recreational pursuits. Kindred souls have a way of discovering each other in almost any group. From then on, they seek each other's presence, because of the pleasures they share.

Can you recall some person whom you more or less ignored for years until you accidentally discovered that you and he were born in the same city, attended the same school, fought in the same military or naval engagement, shared the

same hobby, nearly died of the same operation, or voted for the same candidate in an election?

The force of these personal similarities, once discovered, is so great that it will pay you to seek out kindred interests in your early conversations with any new acquaintance whose liking you desire to arouse. Looking for traces of kinship of ideas or experiences during any conversational lull will give you something to think about and discuss, and might easily get you past an uncomfortable pause. So pick up little hints from the other person's conversation that suggest possibilities. Pursue each lead to establish or disqualify it.

While two people with common past interests find it easy to indulge in reminiscence, there is an even stronger way of accomplishing the same general result by projecting those common interests into the future. If two people with similar experiences are attracted to each other, it is likely that that attraction will be strengthened if they find that they share the same ambitions for the future. As long as you are not competing too directly with the other person, this will afford an effective technique.

See whether you can find a connection between your search for pleasure or profit and the other person's. If you find that you are working toward the same objective, you can help him, and he can help you, and the mutual interchange of information and ideas will prove fascinating. Instead of pulling in opposite directions, you will pull together, and you will be in for a talkfest. The bonds of permanent friendship might be cemented during a single preliminary conversation of that kind.

Every such discussion will enable you to store up material for future use. People are pleased to hear occasional references to previous conversations and common experiences. Possibly there is no more effective way to demonstrate the depth of your interest in somebody else than to recall

something he said or did that gave you pleasure. He will be surprised, pleased, and flattered.

So try to remember some unusual bit of information about each person you meet. Select a detail for which you are convinced he would *like* to be remembered. Write it down, or weave it into some mental imagery such as is helpful in remembering names. Be sure you can recall it later. Go beyond this, and discuss it with one or two friends who also know the other person, thus giving him a bit of free advertising. He will like it if it comes to his attention.

This simple technique of remembering favorable details will gain impressive results. Many a salesman has put himself over in a big way by applying this technique on a mass production basis, sometimes with the aid of a card-index system.

One of the most popular persons I have ever known was a little old lady who had outlived her generation. To fight off her loneliness, she made a hobby of people.

She was the sort of person you would hardly notice. But what distinguished her was the ability to ask a question or make some comment related to a discovery that she had made during a previous conversation with you. "Did you ever get rid of that counterfeit quarter?" or "Did that weed-killer really work the way it was supposed to?"

During every conversation she diverted some fragment of a previous discussion into a new channel, using it as an entering wedge for capturing interest. She had an encyclopedic fund of trivia relating to friends and acquaintances. She was skillful in asking questions and making apt comments. I knew that such skill seldom happens by accident.

"Mrs. White," I asked one day, "do you have a card-index system in your mind?"

She looked startled and answered, "No."

"Then how do you recall all these miscellaneous bits of information about the people you know?"

Then she told me something that surprised me. It surprised me because I would not have suspected it of her and also because she told me. But she did make me promise not to disclose her secret. Ever since her death, several years ago, I have had a feeling that I could do her a service by broadcasting that secret, as a sort of legacy from one who loved people but who did not want her friends to realize that she resorted to technique in expressing that love. So here is what she said:

"I don't have any card-index system in my mind, but I do have one at home. It is a little black notebook. In this book I have written the name of almost everybody I know. I keep it up to date, like a diary. Every evening I think back over the day and remember the people I have talked with. Then I write down the things I want to store away."

"Before you talk with somebody," I asked, "do you go to your little black book and get ideas for your conversation?"

"No," she said, "but when I meet somebody I know, I do try to remember what I have written about him. Almost always, this makes me think of something to ask or say."

I asked Mrs. White what had started her on this little hobby.

"I will tell you," she said. "For many years my husband was a salesman. He called on several hundred customers, getting around to each about once every six months, and he had a poor memory. Once he read a book on salesmanship. The author suggested making up a card file—one card for each customer—and using it to write down birthdays, names and ages of children, and other personal information. Before my husband started out each day, he would decide whom he was going to call on and then get out their cards. Soon after he

started doing that, we had more money to spend, because his sales and commissions increased.

"After my husband died, I was very lonely. Nobody seemed interested in me, so I decided I would have to get interested in other people. That meant I had to talk with them, but I couldn't think of anything to say. Then I thought of these cards my husband used to keep, and that is when my little black book came into being."

Possibly you never thought of yourself as a salesman, but you are one. Whether you sell in the conventional sense or not, all the people you associate with are your customers, and your success depends on getting them sold on your interests, your ideas, your enthusiasms, or your services—and, above all, on yourself. It might well pay you to use a "little black book."

Draw up a list of acquaintances, relatives, and business associates for whose friendship you intend to make a special bid. Then develop a formula for dealing with each individual. List three of his special interests. Underline those interests that you share with him. Write down three ideas on things you can do or say that will contribute to his pleasure and happiness. Indicate topics you had better stay away from. Work out some ideas for interesting surprises that you may have an opportunity to spring in the near future. Jot down some notes on what you think he most values about his association with you, and some suggestions on how you can play up those qualities. Over a period of time, increase the scope of this file, until it includes every person with whom you have an important business or personal relationship.

You'll get many ideas for developing this file as you read this book, and from other sources as well.

In all your efforts to appeal to other people through their special interests, it is obvious that much can be accomplished by adapting yourself to their inclinations and

thoughts. The person who is unwilling to do this demands, in effect, that others adapt themselves to him, if they are to get along with him at all. Such a person can usually win friends only if he is rich, important, or spectacularly attractive in some other respect.

It is not at all necessary to submerge your own personality. You do not need to copy others' patterns of behavior. Supplement, rather than duplicate, them. Be a willow, and bend, rather than an oak which unyieldingly faces the winds of opposition. Learn to bring your mood into harmony with the other person's, and cultivate enough suppleness to follow even sudden or frequent changes. Participate in his activities and enthusiasms when you can. When you can't, contrive to have your point of contact arise in other fields. Get busy and find out what these fields might be.

There are four steps to be followed in your endeavors to adapt yourself to others:

1. Acquire the habit of observing actions and listening well to thoughts expressed. Visualize the other person as a complicated personality consisting of many parts, some of which afford better points of contact for you than others, but all of which you must understand reasonably well to make effective adaptation possible.

2. Select and classify the interests and ambitions that you share with the other person and fix them in your memory. Then contrive to have your minds meet on one of the common grounds as often as possible, so that most of the time you spend with him will be devoted to conversation or activities of interest to both of you. Avoid areas of disagreement as much as possible, but when you find yourself inadvertently trapped in them, find an inoffensive way out.

3. Keep in step with the other person's thoughts and actions. This does not mean that you must always follow him, nor that you must always lead. But whether you are follow-

ing or leading, never get so far behind or ahead that you make an awkward traveling companion. Do not put him under a strain to keep up with you, and never attempt to lead him where he does not want to go. Whenever he does the leading, go along with him, and never let him feel that he must make an excessive effort.

4. Do not make the mistake of imagining that you must share all the other person's activities, whether you enjoy them or not. If you don't smoke or drink, for example, maintain your independence in these respects. But take the trouble to devise a brief, effective explanation, making sure that it is satisfactory to him and that it casts no aspersions on his habits.

Recently I heard someone say, "I stopped smoking five years ago, and it was hard to do. If I smoke just one cigarette, I'm afraid I'll have all that trouble to go through over again." You can easily imagine the sympathy that such a remark would arouse.

Many people are able to refuse a drink with satisfactory grace simply by saying, "Sorry, but I am a teetotaler." If you like, you can blame it on your wife, your doctor, even your unfortunate past. If you advance a sufficiently plausible reason, you will seldom hurt anybody's feelings by refusing.

On one of those convivial occasions when round after round of drinks was passed out in an assemblage of men, I watched one member of the group wave each glass aside, muttering some long unintelligible sentence ending with the word "stomach." He did occasionally take a sip of water. His spirits matched those of the crowd, however. When the meeting was almost ready to break up, somebody asked, quite sympathetically and in a hushed voice, "Bill, just what is it that's wrong with your stomach?"

Bill answered, "Nothing—and I want to keep it that way!"

With these points in mind, remember this formula for adapting yourself to the other person: Observe his interests and aims, and select those that you can share. Align your thoughts and actions with his. Minimize or avoid even minor points of difference between his thoughts and habits and yours.

While following this formula, recognize the other person's right to independence of thought, even to prejudices, however unsound they may be. Do not try to educate him into adopting your opinions, unless there is a specific advantage to be gained for him as well as for you. Go out of your way to overcome his suspicion of prejudice on your part, by demonstrating your complete lack of it. When you have trouble understanding his point of view, get him to explain it. Arouse his desire to make you a convert to it.

Most people will advise you to avoid discussing touchy controversial subjects, such as politics and religion. But often you can arouse the other person's interest by seeking his comments on one of your cherished beliefs, even though you know he does not share it, or by asking him to furnish data about his—especially if you have taken the trouble to inform yourself sufficiently to be able to point out what you find to admire in that belief. But be careful to do this only with people who are reasonably broad-minded, and be broad-minded about it yourself.

Why not apply this to somebody you know? Pick out a person whose religion or political belief is different from your own. Protect yourself by selecting somebody not likely to cause much trouble if your experiment misses fire. Then see how many points of agreement can be disclosed by a friendly discussion. See what happens. After a few such experiments, you are practically certain to acquire skill in bridging gaps between divergent points of view. Such an ability is well worth cultivating.

This leads us to the consideration of a technique that is more difficult to apply but highly effective—the technique of compelling others to adapt themselves to you instead of your adapting yourself to them. When your thoughts and actions hold such compelling interest that people will stop to listen and watch, all the personal interest you could desire will be given to you. This subject will be given separate treatment in pages to come.

There are two more techniques, however, that belong in the present chapter. They concern the process of arousing interest in one's self by seeking advice or help.

For some years before his death, Alvin Kraenzlein resided in my grandmother's home. In those days I was not aware that he was a celebrity. I have since often heard him described as the greatest all-round athlete of all time. That, however, is among the minor reasons why he stands out in my memory. The most important reason I am going to describe.

One day, as a high school vacation approached, I asked him, "Where do you think I could get a job for the summer?"

Up to that time I do not recall that he had ever noticed my presence. I had been just a noisy source of irritation and annoyance, to be avoided. But in a moment all that was brushed aside.

Dr. Kraenzlein gave me his interested and undivided attention for the next two hours. He questioned me about my interests and desires, my aptitudes, and my small amount of experience, and then said he would give the matter consideration.

Several days later he got into his car and drove to the office of a nationally known company that maintained a branch near my home. There he made all the necessary arrangements for a summer job for me. It promised to be

congenial and instructive. He dropped by to give me the good news. He was full of interest, enthusiasm, and plans for my welfare. And all I had done was to ask one simple question!

Haven't you often noticed a reaction like Dr. Kraenzlein's in yourself? Don't you feel a sudden upsurge of friendliness when somebody singles you out to compliment your intelligence by asking your opinion, even if he is a person you never specially cared for in the past? That is a natural reaction, and you can take advantage of it by making it a means of arousing interest in yourself.

Whether he deserves it or not, practically everyone credits himself with good judgment. He is proud of his ability to analyze problems and to come up with the right answers. So, when you are attempting to attract someone's interest, consider asking for his advice. He will be pleased to discover that you defer to his judgment. It will make him feel charitable to lend you a helping hand. But there are advantages over and above this.

When the other person does something for you because you have indicated that it will be appreciated, his performance places him in the position of trying to please you. Not only will he make an immediate effort, but he will later want to follow up on it for the sake of estimating his success. He will feel that he has an investment in you, which he will exert himself to protect. These advantages you can gain simply by requesting a small favor—that is, by seeking information, advice, or help. Besides, the assistance you get may be worth even more than the increased friendliness.

Adults know that much of the help young people could gain from them is withheld through fear of arousing the youngsters' resentment. But if the kids only knew it, their elders are suckers for the chance to lend a helping hand. It

gives them a natural feeling of superiority, and practically nobody is immune from that. Yet almost everybody who has attained the ripe old age of forty will admit that he wasted practically every such opportunity encountered during his youth. He will also admit that nothing could have been done about it because of youth's natural egotism and misguided self-sufficiency. But any young person who will go out of his way to arouse the parental instinct in older people will discover that there are many ways of doing it and of gaining profit from it. And you don't have to be so dog-gone young either to make it work. As a matter of fact, it is surprisingly easy for a person of mature years to get good results in dealing with someone only half his age.

There are, however, several precautions that should be scrupulously observed:

1. Your problem must be a genuine one. Even though your original desire is to improve a personal relationship, let your desire to gain the object of your request be even stronger. Make it clear that the favor will mean something to you, even if you have to spend several days figuring out what it will be. To be safe, ask for advice or help that you actually need.

If you are careful about it, you may occasionally ask advice for the purpose of satisfying some secret personal motive. You successfully conceal such a motive only if you are able to find a plausible reason for the favor you request. Make sure that it is a genuine reason rather than one invented offhand. If you let the other person get the idea that you are taking advantage of him, you will probably get out of his good graces even faster than you would otherwise get in. And in this connection it is worth while to point out that there is nothing wrong with a secret motive unless that motive is sinister.

2. The solution of your problem should fall within one of the other person's areas of specialization. Your request will arouse his interest only if it strikes a responsive chord in him and if it fits in with his inclinations and abilities, so that he will derive personal satisfaction from granting it. Your turning to him will be evidence that you regard him as an authority—possibly as the one person to whom you should turn for help. It is therefore desirable to have a fair amount of personal knowledge of the individual whom you are seeking to influence.

Of course, some performances—such as helping a stranger in distress—are gratifying to almost everyone, provided they do not take too much time or trouble. But inevitably there is less of an individual touch in this act. By giving the other person an opportunity to exercise some special faculty—especially if it is a faculty for which he has not yet received wide recognition—you have an effective avenue of appeal to him.

Look for some way of tying your request to the other person's hobbies, to his unusual business or professional knowledge, or to some cause or crusade he is eager to promote, and you will deal with him in a field in which his associations are likely to be most agreeable. If you take advantage of his interests, his action in granting your favor will come to him naturally, and he will enjoy it.

3. If possible, find something in the other person's experience that is analogous to your predicament. Show him the parallel and point out that he must have solved the same problem successfully himself. Ask what he thinks you should do. Practically anybody will respond to this by showing immediate interest.

4. Make it as easy as possible for the other person to grant your request. You will arouse resentment if you dis-

regard his convenience, so show your willingness to handle whatever portion of the job you can do yourself.

Don't create the impression that you think you are merely exercising one of your constitutional rights. Instead, be a little diffident about imposing on his good will. He will then probably try hard to please you. Never barge in at the wrong moment, and never imply that the matter must be handled immediately, whether he is ready or not, unless that is a part of the favor you are seeking and you know it will contribute to your success.

Try to avoid making any request that takes time, involves money, or causes inconvenience. Let him see that your benefits will be large in relation to any sacrifice he may have to make. If it seems desirable, offer some service as recompense.

Above all, if you are seeking a favor for the express purpose of establishing a friendship, be sure you don't ask for two or three successive favors from the same person. This is almost always a one-shot technique.

5. Display full appreciation for benefits obtained. Go out of your way to give credit to your benefactor. Make sure he understands how much he has helped you. Report to him on your success, particularly if you have asked him for advice.

Unfortunately, much of the advice we receive is worth exactly what it costs—nothing. Or so it seems. But the person who gives you personal guidance will feel that his words are wise. Occasionally he will regard them as priceless. So he will want to see his ideas work out. Besides, one of the easiest ways to demonstrate your sincerity is to make good use of the help you receive. Even though you may be unable to apply his advice directly, at least use it as the basis for developing a better point of view. Try to modify your

actions so that at least some of the outcome can be attributed to his efforts. Let him know that you have done so. Without overdoing it, give his ego a build-up.

At first glance it may seem that requesting somebody to do you a favor will impose on his good nature, and thus invite resentment. But with a proper approach, it can establish a solid friendly relation, even with someone who has never shown interest in you. By asking the favor with care, you can often place the other person in a position of receiving rather than giving. He will gain the opportunity to do you a favor, and if you are careful about it he will get all the other lifts discussed in this book. He will derive just as much benefit as you do, and you will get into each other's good graces.

The same general emotional uplift can be created without asking any favor at all. Few human beings can resist the temptation to set you straight when you fall into error, particularly in some field where the other person considers himself an authority. So when you have trouble capturing interest and attention, try this: Express some fairly evident, but natural, mistake in relation to one of the subjects in which you know the other person has extensive knowledge. Be sure he perceives your mistake. Then let him correct it. In that process, you will develop an interest that can perhaps be led in any direction you desire.

But be cautious about using this technique. A mild misstatement expressing normal misunderstanding may prove effective, but any foolish extreme will just suggest that you are lacking in common sense.

There is one final technique that calls for discussion here. It has to do with your behavior after the other person has granted you a favor. This technique will guard against your inadvertently letting your benefactor down.

When somebody owes you money, don't you feel better if you know he has not forgotten the obligation? Even if he can't pay it at once, don't you at least like to receive the interest? And you know that when you are the debtor, your creditor appreciates the same kind of treatment from you.

The underlying principle applies also to obligations not involving money. Discharge them as soon as you can, of course, but in the meantime be prompt with the payment of interest, whether in service or gratitude. Let your creditor know that you continue to recognize your debt. It takes little effort, and the result can convert your obligation into an asset.

There is a real art to the matter of owing money, and it applies also to other forms of indebtedness. Of course, you make it a point to meet your obligations when they are due, but this sometimes becomes impossible. Some people who cannot discharge their debt on the due date avert their faces or cross to the other side of the street when they meet their creditors. Nothing could be worse.

If you cannot pay promptly, let your creditor realize that you will pay as soon as possible. If you cannot pay in kind, find something else he will accept. If he thinks you don't seem much worried about your debt, say that you aren't, and then go on to say, "But the only reason is that I don't think the way for me to get it paid is to worry about it!" Then do something to demonstrate the seriousness of your intentions.

Occasionally, when you have some reason for desiring to sustain somebody else's interest over a period of time, it may be well to put yourself under obligation to him, and then intentionally keep that status. Make sure he knows that you are obligated, and also that he knows you know it. At the same time, provide plenty of reasons for him to enjoy

your friendship, so that your obligation, in its tendency to drive him away, will be countered by stronger forces that tend to pull him toward you. Then encourage him to do a little guessing on how you will satisfy the obligation. Tantalize him, not too much but just enough, and he will keep his eye on you.

## Chapter 12

### *Raising Other People's Egos*

MARY had made a drawing of a cow eating daisies. It was pretty good for an eight-year-old—at least Mary thought so. At dinner she showed it to her father. He looked at it critically—the same way he had been analyzing the work of his subordinates all day at the office. Then he told Mary what was wrong with her drawing and asked her to make another to show him at dinner the next night.

Mary blinked hard to hold back the tears. Fifteen minutes later her father suggested that she sit up straight. His request wasn't particularly critical, but by this time Mary's resistance was low. She left the table and went to her room, where she could express her emotions without observation. Her father looked at his wife. "What ails her?" he asked. His wife replied, "Maybe she feels the way I do." But he only half heard. He was thinking that Mary acted just like most of the girls in his office, and wondered why he had to be surrounded by prima donnas. As far as he could see, he was sentenced to a lifetime of dealing with the same unmanageable, hard-to-get-along-with people day after day.

To defend himself against those who resented his efforts to improve them, he found refuge evenings in his newspaper and in his hobby of photography. This was a lucky break for his family, since he had the unfortunate habit of damaging people's egos by making them feel unimportant and

ineffectual. He aroused their fears, undermined their feelings of security, fed their suspicions of inferiority. He commented on flaws in their characters and in their work. He minimized their achievements and took the kick out of their successes. He gave them the opposite of what they craved.

Faultfinding has a cumulative effect in upsetting people. It increases their sensitiveness and makes them uncooperative and unresponsive. There is a better method of evaluating people than Mary's father used.

Let us consider Susan, who, having learned a new piece on the piano, made her mother wait dinner a few minutes while she played it for her father. "I wish I could do that," he said, smiling all over his face. Then, as they sat down to eat, he asked, "What are you going to learn next?" The little girl said she didn't know. "Well, if you keep on that way," said her father, "you'll soon be playing before the whole school."

A little later he said to her, "If you would eat as carefully as you play the piano, you wouldn't spill your food." Susan immediately tried to please him. Her father thought how lucky he was. He had the nicest family in the world, and everybody down at the office was nice too.

The reason he felt so lucky was in himself. He habitually saw good in others and in their work. He pointed to their successes with pride, as though they were important to him also. By searching out qualities to admire, by seeking things to applaud, and by putting his praise into words of commendation and encouragement toward greater achievement, he made people like themselves better, helped them to feel more important, and gave them the recognition they so ardently desired.

Approval, like faultfinding, also has a cumulative effect. But approval, instead of upsetting people, strengthens them and makes them cooperative and responsive.

Susan's father bestowed recognition and credit, and so he nourished people's egos, satisfied their emotional hungers, and built up their self-esteem. They sought to earn more and more of his commendation by trying to please him. Any number of people were his willing slaves.

Many of us realize the importance of a stimulating attitude toward others, but we are hesitant about adopting it. We know that other people have typed us in respect to character and behavior, and as a result we are self-conscious about making a change. But we can change. The way to begin is to *start!*

Let us see what happened to Tom Flemming, who, after nineteen years of married life, was having trouble with his wife. She criticized everything he said or did. She took grim delight in explaining his flaws to others, especially in his presence. Nothing about him seemed to suit her. So he had erected a complicated set of defenses. Each morning he got up early. In summer he worked in his garden for half an hour before breakfast, and in winter he puttered at his workbench. At breakfast he hid behind a newspaper until, with some final criticism ringing in his ears, he left for the office. Evenings he spent long hours at the radio, which he kept loud to discourage conversation.

Sometimes he would speculate about this state of affairs. *Flora sends me out to face the world*, he told himself, *but first she dulls the edge of my sword, and sometimes she snaps off the whole blade.*

Tom retaliated her faultfinding in kind. The eye-for-an-eye complex, so deeply ingrained in human nature, influenced many of his comments to her. The result was an unending battle of recriminations.

Then Tom got an idea. One evening he came home from the office and called out, "Flora, where are you?" Tom hadn't greeted her thus in many years, so with considerable

alarm she descended the stairs, answering, "Here! What's wrong?"

Tom didn't answer. Instead, he crossed the floor to meet her, put both arms around her waist, and pulled her close. He kissed her squarely on the mouth, the way they do in the movies. In her astonishment, she yielded at first, then pushed him away. "Let me smell your breath," she said.

He allowed her to do so. He chuckled while she sniffed. She seemed disappointed, then turned her suspicions elsewhere. "Well then, what do you *want*?"

Suddenly he pushed her away. "Let's forget it," he said.

But Flora persisted. "You must have had something in mind!" she said.

Tom decided things weren't working out so badly after all. "Yes," he said, "I did." He studied her for a long moment. "I just wanted a little satisfaction around the house."

"You did?" She looked embarrassed. "Well, just sit down," she went on, "and read your paper while I get dinner."

Several times after they had sat down to dinner she looked at him strangely. Neither he nor she said anything for some time. Finally Tom gathered himself together and said, "This is a good dinner!"

Flora looked surprised. "That's the first nice thing you've said about your food for a long time," she replied.

"Well," responded Tom, "I've got a lot of nice things to say. Not about the dinner, but about you. In fact, I wrote down a list of them at the office today."

He rattled them off: "You always cook me a good dinner. You never run up bills we can't pay. You save our money. You keep the house neat and clean. You dress well and keep yourself attractive. There are a lot of other things I like about you too." And Tom went on with his recital.

At first Flora reacted by biting her lip. Soon she became flustered. Presently there were tears in her eyes. Finally Tom wound up, "That's all I could think of today, but there will be more."

Tom told me all this and then went on to say, "It sounds as though I got a bad reaction, but I didn't. I got my reward all right!"

"The following evening, at dinner, she had a list of compliments for *me*. She said that I was a good provider, that I never insisted on going out alone, that she could depend on me for all our minor repair jobs, and that I wasn't a disorderly smoker. But there was one negative point she wanted to add. And what do you suppose it was? I was too critical of her!"

That night Tom and Flora made a bargain. They would criticize each other only once each week, during a specified hour on Sunday afternoons. For the rest of the time they would bite their tongues in silence. And their criticisms had to be in writing.

When Tom told me about it, they had had their hour of mutual criticism only once. Flora had offered three criticisms, Tom only two. So it didn't take them an hour after all. And if you could have seen them walking down the avenue on that sunshiny Sunday afternoon, you would have thought that they had discovered the touchstone of marital bliss!

Tom's facing the situation squarely was good strategy. It got results. Giving praise brought benefits, which were made more impressive by having been projected against a background of disapproval and carping criticism. The mere fact that Tom had not habitually praised his wife and raised her ego made it easier for him to stimulate an immediate favorable reaction once he got started.

Isn't it true that hard-won praise has exceptional value, especially when it comes from one of those few persons who mean most to our happiness and emotional well-being? If you are a wife or husband, a father or mother, a son or daughter, an employer or a customer, and if you have been slow to praise, you can profit by showing the appreciation the other person wants and needs. His sense of well-being, his growth and development, his progress and success—and also his good opinion of you—will be stimulated.

Even though Tom frankly told Flora what he was doing and why, he nevertheless got results. Though in some situations praise administered with an ulterior motive is doomed to failure, since the other person might read insincerity into the praise and brand it as flattery, this is not so in the home. You can flatter your wife or husband, your parents, or your children—sometimes even saying that you are doing so—and still make it work. Try it and see. You will find that it makes life richer for both you and the persons concerned. On the other hand, if you don't give your wife or husband an occasional bit of outright applesauce, it is a safe bet that she or he is suffering, like Flora, for want of kind words.

While insincere praise, or for that matter even sincere praise if it is delivered with an ulterior motive, often backfires, there are circumstances under which it is practically foolproof. Consider another example:

When I was young and gullible, I once worked out of a sales office where there was a Miss Jones who kept the accounts. She never showed the slightest interest in me, but there came a day when her attention was riveted on me, and she became extremely self-conscious in my presence. I would catch her in studied scrutiny of me whenever I looked up. At the same time I discovered that I couldn't keep my eyes off her.

One of the older salesmen had come to me with a story. "Have you ever noticed Miss Jones?" he had asked. I said I hadn't particularly. "Well, she has noticed you. She told me yesterday that you were her idea of a perfect man. She said, 'If Mr. Wetherill ever crooks his finger at me, I'll follow him to the ends of the earth!' I told her she was silly, but she said, 'That's the way I feel about him!' Can you imagine that?"

So I knew why I was interested in her, but I am ashamed to admit that it took me several days to figure out why she was interested in me. It was simply that my fellow salesman had told her the same story about me that he had told me about her. After releasing these forces, he had stood idly by and chuckled in amusement.

If Miss Jones and I were to meet on the street today, we would probably not recognize each other. But I have not forgotten the lesson in this episode.

The lesson is that flattery delivered by an intermediary is practically irresistible. While you can often get a good response by telling the other person directly what you admire about him—calling attention to his abilities and achievements, applauding his good qualities, and otherwise appealing to his vanities—you can be surer of results by conveying your compliment through a friend who is so constituted that he cannot rest until he has delivered it to the ears for which it was intended. With practice you can pick out such a person every time.

This discussion makes it appear that the other person's ego affords an always available channel to his friendship and esteem. That is true. Through it you can reach him easily and at will.

By "ego" I mean the individual's valuation of the factors by which he judges himself—his personal qualities, his abilities and accomplishments, every trait that is peculiarly

his. "Raising" his ego not only improves his opinion of himself but also enhances his estimate of the esteem in which he thinks others hold him.

There are many ways of raising his ego, but one basic procedure underlies them all. You must see some personal quality in him that he desires to be recognized, and you must demonstrate that you consider it more of a virtue than he thought you did, or more than he thought it himself. As a consequence you will seem to him to be a person with discrimination to recognize exceptional merit.

Refrain from words and deeds that have the effect of *lowering* the other person's ego. Avoid making him feel inferior or placing him in a position of self-defense. Don't make uncomplimentary remarks or unfavorable comparisons. Never "take a humorous poke" at anyone or hold anyone up to ridicule. Don't point out errors and weaknesses. Let others be wrong occasionally, and you'll get along with them better.

If you can manage to conduct all your human relations in accordance with these precepts, you will discover that you hold one of the magic keys to influence and power.

Back in the depression, Carl Weston suddenly found himself holding a good job. It paid more money than he had ever earned before. Now he and his wife could pay off old debts and give their two little girls better advantages.

It was important for him to hang on to that job, but there was one hitch. His new boss was a tyrant.

It seemed that nothing Carl did suited his boss. Carl listened to incessant criticism. He got every mean job that came along. His mistakes and deficiencies were played up in the front office, where he had originally been hired, and his competences were skillfully concealed from official view. After a couple of months of this, he could no longer properly digest

his food. He tossed at night when he should have been sleeping, and he faced each new day with decreasing vitality.

At last he sat down to figure things out. He ran a succession of ideas through his mind. He stimulated their flow by asking himself questions. He remembered that he had been hired over his boss's head. Could it be that his boss resented this? He hardly thought so. Was his boss fearful of competition from him? That idea was absurd.

His boss was a rough and uncouth type of man, who punctuated all his statements with profanity. Carl didn't. His boss was careless in his speech, used bad grammar, butchered his English. Carl didn't. His boss looked like a high-class stevedore. Carl looked like an executive.

Carl considered the possibility that his boss felt inferior in his presence. What could he do about it? He let further ideas run through his mind. Should he act and dress like his boss? No, that wouldn't do. Should he revise his manner of speech? That hardly seemed like the right method. Should he complain to the front office? No.

Suddenly he was sure he had hit on the right idea. He had been asked to work that evening, and he knew why: it was sadism that had made his boss want to spend several hours inflicting as much mental and emotional discomfort and torment on him as he could.

Carl gave him free rein. He did everything his boss demanded—one assignment after another, all of which were calculated to embarrass him and eventually to break him. He handled all of them to the best of his ability. Suddenly he sat back in his chair, looked his boss full in the face, and mustered his friendliest smile.

"You know," he said, "I have just suddenly begun to understand you."

His boss looked surprised, and also piqued. "What do you mean?"

"Well, I have a bosom friend who is enough like you to be a carbon copy. I never noticed the resemblance before. But I was sitting here thinking about you, and suddenly it hit me."

His boss looked even more surprised. "A bosom friend, you say?"

"Yes," said Carl. "I've known him many years." Then, after some hesitation, he went on. "At first, I had trouble getting along with him too!"

"You did?" asked the boss.

"Yes, but I got along with him as soon as we quit fighting each other!"

Then Carl went into a detailed account of his association with this other man. He mentioned their common interests, especially those which he and his boss could conceivably share. He talked for half an hour, and was gratified to observe a constantly improving reaction on the part of his superior. Then he suggested, "Why don't you and I go out and get something to eat?"

That was the end of Carl Weston's trouble with his boss.

The first lesson in this story is that it pays to study every serious personality problem—by collecting all possible clues, analyzing them, and rejecting those that prove false.

The second lesson is that once the source of trouble has been discovered it can be studied for the purpose of searching out every possibility for removing it, until the right way is found.

When Carl had realized that his very efforts to make a good impression and deserve the confidence of others made his boss feel inferior by contrast, he changed his tactics. He supplanted his boss's feeling of inferiority with one of equality, attaining a better balance of egos. In heightening his boss's ego, he heightened his own sense of superiority. But he did it in the secrecy of his own mind.

Problems of conflicting egos appear prominently in many business dealings, particularly among people working for the same company. This is effectively illustrated in the story of Pete Swenson.

Pete had a plan, and he wanted to put it across. He was a clerk in the office of the general manager of a large bakery, and he wanted a better job. He thought that he could get a promotion if he found a way to save the company a lot of money. His plan, he felt sure, would accomplish this. So it was important to get it accepted—important to his company and also to him.

His plan was to replace a large fleet of electric trucks with gasoline-driven trucks. He had collected many figures and analyzed them, and he felt sure that he was right. So he took the matter up with the general manager.

But Pete was rebuffed. The general manager made the excuse that he was "too busy" and added, "Mr. Mullin is in charge of that department. If you want me to go over your idea, you'll have to sell him on it first." So Pete went to the head of the delivery department.

"I think we're spending an unnecessarily large amount of money," he said, "in operating our trucks. So I've worked out a plan showing how we can save \$23,000 a year by shifting to gasoline-driven trucks. They would be less expensive . . ." At that point Pete was interrupted.

The delivery manager glared at him. "Who's running this department?" he asked. Pete shriveled to a slightly smaller size. "You are," he said. "But I think . . ."

"You," said the delivery manager, "are paid to think upstairs in the office. I do the thinking down here!"

Then Pete shrank to a still smaller size, put his tail between his legs, and retreated. Out of the window had gone his hope of sponsoring a successful project, calling himself to the favorable attention of his management, and gaining a

promotion for himself. Or so it seemed. But . . . ? *Maybe, thought Pete, if I could approach him some other way.*

A few days later, Pete got busy again. He found several excuses for dealing with Mr. Mullin on entirely different matters. He made each of these contacts as friendly as he could. He lauded the delivery department's efficiency. He picked out points of special pride to Mr. Mullin, and commented on them favorably. He remarked, "We pencil-pushers upstairs don't have a chance to get into things the way you fellows do." He deferred to Mr. Mullin's judgment. In talking to others, he referred to the delivery manager as an authority and a good fellow, each time making sure that his comment was justified and sincere. A couple of times, he asked for personal advice. He got it, and it was good, so he used it. He went back to say how it had worked out. By this process he created a favorable atmosphere.

After what Pete considered sufficient advance work, and after enough of an interim to let the earlier incident fade in Mr. Mullin's memory, he tackled his main project again. He walked into the delivery office full of friendliness, and talked about the illness of Mr. Mullin's youngest child for a few moments. Then he began, "Mr. Mullin, I would like to get you to do me a personal favor."

"Sure, any time," answered Mr. Mullin.

"Well," began Pete, "I have worked out some figures. They look mighty interesting, but they can't be right. You know more about trucks than I do, more than anybody else around here, so I thought if I could get you to go over these figures with me, probably you are the one person who could show me where I'm wrong."

Mr. Mullin chuckled. Sure he would! He'd be glad to. So they got their heads together. Pete brought out his papers, and started at the beginning. "Yep," said Mr. Mullin, "they've got to be wrong." So he picked up his pencil to

make calculations. Every few minutes he would interrupt to say, "All right so far!"

That process went on for a half hour, which took them to the end of the analysis. Mr. Mullin looked up. "Pete," he said, "you're not wrong!"

"I'm not?" asked Pete, with all the astonishment he could muster.

"No," said Mr. Mullin, "you're not."

Pete took a long breath. Then he said, "Well, Mr. Mullin, I wish you'd take these papers and go over the figures again, just to make sure. Then, if you still think they're all right, there isn't anybody who would better know what to do with the plan than you. I'll be glad to help any way I can. If you want me to do any additional figuring, let me know."

The upshot, as you can imagine, was that Mr. Mullin presented the management with a plan for replacing the company's electric trucks. The plan was adopted. Mr. Mullin felt very big about the whole thing, and he told where the idea had come from. Pete was mighty glad about this boost, but he reflected that the general manager, remembering the earlier conversation, probably would have spoken up to protect him in case Mr. Mullin had decided to cop all the glory for himself.

The difference between Pete's two approaches is evident.

In the first approach, which he used both on the general manager and in his initial consultation with Mr. Mullin, he failed to anticipate risks. He expected that his plan would be accepted by the other person just because it was good. But such is the perversity of human nature that a wounded ego is often blind to a beneficial idea, however impressive and obvious it may be to others. By parading his own wisdom in the other person's bailiwick, he got a bad reaction. After all, Mr. Mullin considered himself the expert. By showing the savings possible under the new method, Pete implied criti-

cism of the existing one, thus casting an inadvertent reflection on Mr. Mullin's ability to handle his job. Pete's remarks were, as a result, taken as uncomplimentary—and Mr. Mullin reacted in an altogether natural way.

In the second approach, Pete avoided all these risks. Instead of talking down to the trucking manager, he aroused the older man's desire to help a youngster along. Mr. Mullin was given the chance to educate Pete, who tucked his own cleverness out of sight and drew on his listener's. As a result Pete got what he wanted—which was simply a fair hearing for a good idea.

It is easy to see the value of raising the other person's ego when you are trying to pave the way for some personal advantage. Intelligently handled, for right purposes, such an approach usually turns out well.

There are times when this approach should be used for the other person's benefit. Here is such a case:

Ted Horton had a job he liked but was underpaid. His boss readily admitted that he was worth more money, but cited the policies that prevented giving it to him. "I realize that you have been extremely valuable to the company," he would say, "but you're getting almost as much as some of our department heads right now." Ted listened to that sort of talk for many months, then decided on a different line of action.

He compiled records of all his major accomplishments during the previous five years. He concentrated on projects he had initiated, developed, and carried to a successful conclusion. Most of them took the form of new production methods. He had designed equipment, developed new types of workbenches, rerouted the flow of parts and assemblies, and simplified paper-work procedures. He had also re-designed some of the company's products, making them

cheaper to build and more attractive to customers. He had had little help from anybody.

After collecting his data, he discussed his project with me.

"It seems," he said, "that this record should get me a good job somewhere else. I have calculated the savings that resulted from the improvements made by me, and they amount to an almost astronomical figure. Since my company won't promote me or give me a reasonable salary increase, I think I should move on. Instead of working as assistant engineer in a minor department, I ought to be able to go in higher up."

I looked over the data and agreed. So, together, we mapped out a plan of approach. After wishing Ted good luck, I asked him to let me know how his effort turned out.

Three weeks later I met him in town. He was depressed. After a little hemming and hawing he said, "I guess I'll just hang on where I am."

It developed that Ted had made two calls. In both calls he had talked to the prospective employer's chief engineer and had encountered a discouraging lack of interest.

In some surprise I said, "Why didn't you call on the head man, as you said you were going to?"

Ted replied a little sheepishly, "I guess I lost my nerve."

I talked with him like a Dutch uncle. "If you see the chief engineer, he's just going to regard you as a competitor of his. Maybe he has the job you want. He certainly isn't going to help you try to get it away from him. Besides, even if you were looking for an assistantship, maybe you were unlucky enough to call on men who intend taking precautions to see that nobody capable of putting their efforts in the shade is going to get on the company's payroll."

Ted thought about this a moment and then said, "Well, if I'm going to work for the chief engineer, I want to get started on the right foot. If I go over his head before I'm even hired, he might resent me from the beginning."

Obviously Ted lacked confidence in himself, so I proceeded to give him a build-up. "Why imagine that you must work *under* him? Maybe you can find a company that needs a *new* chief engineer. With a record like yours, you might as well go after a job that will let you express your real ability."

"That," said Ted, "sounds like a good idea. The hitch is—can I put it over?"

I began to lay it on thick. I tried to counteract his sense of inferiority, to furnish him with moral support, to bolster his ego, to strengthen his determination, to prove he had a sound plan that would work out, and thus to build his confidence in himself. In painstaking detail I showed the weight of evidence contained in his past successes and pointed out that it was only fair to himself and his family to extract their full value.

"Make up your mind that you are as good as the man you are talking to," I told him. "You will know what you are talking about. You will be dealing with facts. You will be the world's foremost authority on your own past achievements, and you'll have records to back up every word you utter. If you just get your story across to the right man, you'll find he has been looking for you just as hard as you have been looking for him. If he has the kind of job to offer that you want, make no mistake about it, you'll get it! If he doesn't, you won't, and you can cross his name off your list. But the only way to find out whether or not he has it is to get your story in front of him. Keep on doing that, with one man after another, and sooner or later you'll connect with the job you want."

In the next few weeks I heard no further word from Ted. Then one afternoon a long-distance call came in from a city a thousand miles away. The caller identified himself as president of a manufacturing company employing several hundred people. "A man named Ted Horton has just applied to

me for a job as chief engineer," he said. "He looks like the kind of fellow we want, and he gave your name as a reference. Because we want to act right away, I thought I'd get you on the telephone." Then he went on to describe the job, and asked whether I thought Ted could fill it satisfactorily. "If you have the chance to hire Ted for that job at a reasonable salary," I answered, "I would advise you not to let him get out of your office without hiring him. You'll find that he can prove his value within the first two weeks."

The next week end Ted was in town making arrangements to move his family. He called me up. Yes, he had got the job. It was exactly what he wanted. The future looked rosy indeed.

Possibly Ted got the job because someone who knew him and recognized his ability also knew that a boost for his self-esteem might spell the difference between failure and success and that all he needed was to have his ego raised, which would give him the courage to go ahead.

There are many occasions when it is possible to get a constructive result by building up the courage of a man who is faltering. It behooves each of us to develop our faculties for handling such build-ups and to recognize and use all opportunities for applying them. There is probably no self-development program that would pay higher dividends. In practically any business, these dividends are likely to take the form of promotions and improved earnings.

I know three men who are working for the same company. Their age, experience, and responsibilities are roughly equivalent, so they are competing with each other for promotions. They are all reasonably aggressive, and, except for one factor, it is difficult to tell which of them will progress most rapidly. Yet if anyone should inform me that ten years from now one of these men will still be in approximately the same job, another will head his department, and the third will be

president of his company, I feel convinced that I could even now name the one who will occupy each of these positions. At least, I could unless one or more of these men changes his habits.

The first of these men, in his imagination, has set up a private little shrine at which he worships himself. Keenly aware of his own abilities, he refuses to recognize those of others. Whenever he speaks, he feels that the matter is settled. Never, except possibly by accident, does he raise the ego of any of his associates. Instead he takes pains to demonstrate that their knowledge and ability are inferior to his own. The harder he tries to advance, the more vigorously they will block him. He is sowing the seeds of his own defeat.

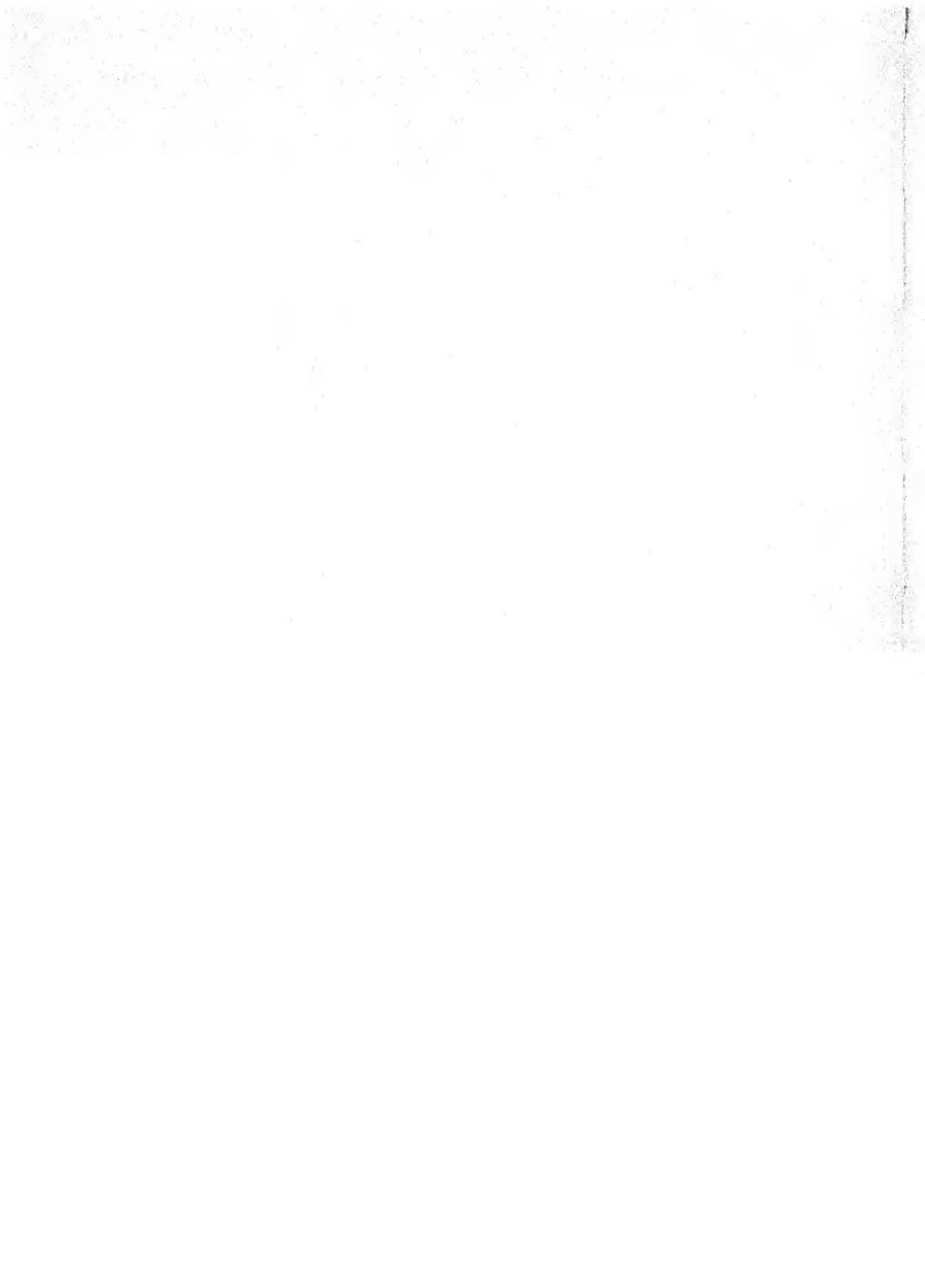
The second of these men has learned what he considers a set of smart tricks. He has acquired considerable skill in making other people feel important. He compliments them on their abilities, calls attention to their superiority, emphasizes their assets. But he reserves such treatment for a select group of people. They are the ones whose actions he is seeking to influence. They are his henchmen, who are helping him to get ahead, and they are the people from whom he expects favors in return for his generosity. He raises other people's egos, yes, but he never does it except to satisfy a selfish motive.

Those whose ambitions he is attempting to advance are expected to reciprocate in kind, and they know it. As long as he has favors to confer, they will support him and eagerly do his bidding. Within limits, his tactics get results, and he might become the department head.

But he overlooks two important groups: (1) Those whose ambitions are in conflict with his own and who either secretly or openly hate him, and (2) those who understand the workings of flattery and who therefore avoid him as much as possible. He has undermined his own influence with the men in

these groups—and they comprise a majority of the most intelligent and powerful members of his company. That is why he can never become president.

The third of these men is almost unique. He seldom raises people's egos as a means to a selfish end. He would consider that a bad policy. He has better means of persuasion. In practically every contact he leaves the other person with a heightened feeling of well-being, but not through the employment of guile. He has the desire to get along well with everybody he meets, and knows how to do it. In the long run, this man is almost certain to outdistance his competitors.



### *Part III. Develop Your Conversational Skill*

13. OVERCOMING SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS
14. FINDING A SATISFACTORY TOPIC
15. REMEMBERING A SEQUENCE OF POINTS
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## Chapter 13

### *Overcoming Self-Consciousness*

**A**RTHUR SOMERS was a likable chap who knew his job. He had brains, ability, and experience. In most ways he could hold his own. But he wasn't very successful, because there was one thing he found it hard to do. He had trouble speaking up. Like many another able person, he was muted by the diffidence and shyness that result from self-consciousness. Consequently he tried to limit, rather than to extend, his dealings with people. He avoided contacts, especially with groups. When he did get involved in a group discussion, no matter how important his ideas, he almost always held his tongue.

Those people who knew Arthur well enough found that he had more knowledge than he usually put into words. "Still waters," they would say, "run deep." But only those who knew him mighty well indeed ever discovered the qualities that stimulated such remarks.

Arthur realized how much he was losing because of his reluctance to speak in group discussions. "Time and again," he told me, "I have sat idly by while others seized the initiative and controlled conversation. They had the nerve to talk; I didn't. I have watched people mishandle important problems; later I have seen their plans bog down, only to be discarded and replaced by proposals that I could have suggested in the first place—if I'd had the courage to speak out.

But always I would sit in the background, my tongue parched and swollen because of conflict between desire to talk and fear of a calamity if I did. Hard lumps would rise in my throat. Chills would run up and down my spine. Sometimes I'd actually try to look ignorant for fear of being asked a question. Nobody knew whether I had any ideas or not, so most people assumed I hadn't. Meanwhile I watched the prizes go to those who put their ideas across."

Arthur was fortunate, however, in his clear recognition of his trouble. He realized the many ways in which he was being retarded by his timidity in self-expression. So he was prepared to accept and apply the principles that will be presented in this chapter. Almost as soon as he started using them, he began noticing marked changes in the attitudes of his associates and friends.

"Formerly nobody expected me to talk," he reported, "but that is all changed. No longer am I reluctant about putting my ideas into words. The change came as a shock to some people who had earlier held sway, but they are getting accustomed to it. They have learned that my arguments carry weight. Some of them have become more cautious about their own remarks. A few have striven to get my opinions before going on record themselves. Several have begun deferring to my ideas and asking for my advice. All of them are inclined to listen when I talk, because I still refuse to talk unless there is good reason for doing so. But the biggest change is in my boss. He says I formerly held my light under a bushel. He has given me a raise and a promotion—long overdue because of my past diffidence. But I'll get more promotions, because I've learned what was holding me back!"

Your case is probably less serious than Arthur's. But even though normally immune from self-consciousness, you are doubtless its victim at times. Consider your probable reaction in the following situations: Suppose you are unex-

pectedly called on to make a speech and can think of nothing to say. Suppose your boss dresses you down in the presence of people whose good opinions you cherish. Suppose you catch yourself in a social error. At such times, self-consciousness is normal. But you can learn to face your emergencies with aplomb.

Fortunately extreme self-consciousness, in the average person, is rare. But for most of us, a lesser degree of this trouble arises often. It dissuades us from stepping into the conversational forefront, and when we do, it interferes with our effectiveness. Therefore a logical first step in strengthening conversational skill is to overcome self-consciousness.

By developing courage to speak out, you relieve yourself of undesirable inhibitions. You take the brakes off your ability. You soon find yourself gravitating toward people instead of away from them. Almost automatically, your talents come to the surface in useful form to help you along. You suddenly discover that your old confusion has vanished.

Self-consciousness, after all, is only an emotional hobgoblin. It is easy to control when you know how. So let us make a careful analysis that will disclose its nature and causes, and suggest satisfactory corrective measures. -

Self-consciousness finds keen expression in the novice who attempts a public talk. Consequently, although public speaking is not the subject of our present discussion, we can hitch a few profitable ideas to it.

During the first year I taught public speaking, I was nervous and ill at ease every time I faced an audience. Yes, I know—I was the teacher. But I was self-conscious anyhow. I thought that everybody else was, too.

I used to tell my students that no matter how much they practiced, they could never be sure of overcoming their fear of an audience—at least, not completely. But they could count on developing ability to proceed in spite of that fear.

They could learn to act as though they had confidence whether they did or not. I said that many famous speakers had thus put themselves across, though fear of speech-making haunted them to their graves. What was important, I asserted, was to get your ideas across, to earn the respect of an audience, and to show enough courage and determination to proceed despite emotional disturbance.

That is another way of saying that one method of subduing your fears is to ignore them—if you can. By going ahead and doing the thing you naturally avoid, you automatically develop confidence. When you discover that your fears are groundless, self-possession and poise replace them. And that principle applies to both public and private conversation.

Does this mean you should *never* let fear prevent you from speaking?

It may be advisable to favor yourself by avoiding an occasional difficult situation. But don't keep it up. You cannot overcome self-consciousness by refusing to talk or even by refusing to look at your listener while you talk. Such devices only perpetuate your trouble. You cannot become the life of the party by acting as a wallflower. Instead, learn to meet your conversational opportunities directly. Accept this challenge more and more frequently, until at last your confidence knows no bounds. Having gained the habit of doing this, never lose it—or you may have to gain it all over again.

Getting this habit may not be easy, for the insidious thing about self-consciousness is that it tends to prevent you from taking the very steps that would get it out of your system.

Another way to reduce self-consciousness was suggested during a side discussion after class. A particularly diffident student remarked, "My nervousness begins when I prepare my talk, and gets worse until I start delivering it. By then I am so upset I can't think straight."

He was one of several men gathered at the back of the room. Presently their conversation turned to other topics, and they began to tell funny stories. One story followed another, and then I noticed that the man with exceptional nervousness was taking as lively a part as anyone else. While someone was telling a story, his eyes would light up, indicating that he had just remembered another of his own. Then he could hardly wait to cut in. Afterward I called him aside to comment on this observation.

"Suppose you come to class without preparing your talk," I suggested. "Sit at the back of the room and seek an inspiration. When you get it, give me a signal. Then I'll call on you right away." He tried it, and found that his immediate improvement seemed miraculous. After a few sessions he reported enthusiastically:

"I don't allow myself time to get nervous now. As soon as I've decided what I want to say, I get right up and say it!" There is a very important lesson in that remark.

When you feel an urge to talk, don't stifle it. Instead, get your idea across quickly. Take advantage of your full excitement.

Many times I have watched a self-conscious person wrestle with his temptation to talk. If he manages to kill off the urge, he loses his chance to conquer fear. But if the desire to speak wins out, he usually talks just as freely as anyone else. By seizing the moment of excitement, he overcomes his problem—at least for that moment. Give yourself this advantage.

A shrewd observer of human nature, Douglas Carter, once told a story that will introduce our next point.

"Last night," he said, "I attended the meeting of a new dramatic organization. They were casting their first play. Eighteen people were assembled, and one after another the coach called on each to read a few lines.

None of those people had dramatic experience. Except for one unusual young man whom I will discuss later on, they were much on a par. All of them had one outstanding characteristic. They were trying so hard to avoid looking ridiculous that they succeeded only in achieving exactly what they sought to escape.

"Because of their pride they tried to make a good showing. But because of their fears they were thwarted. They were stilted in their performance. It was pretty sad."

"What about this unusual young man," I asked, "whom you were going to discuss?"

"I'm coming to him," Douglas went on. "He was chubby and good-natured, and he had lots of buoyant energy. He seemed to harbor no inhibitions at all. He said that he had never acted in a play, but he read his lines as though he'd been doing it all his life. Everybody started laughing—and kept it up. The coach let him go on for some time, just because he was good. Then the coach gave him one of the lead parts.

I asked Douglas, "What was the difference between that fellow and the others?"

"There was really only one," he said. "The fat boy let himself go. He opened up. Because he did, he forgot himself and acted natural. And because the others thought about themselves, they were hesitant. They were unable to overcome their self-consciousness."

Trying out for a dramatic performance will plunge the individual into a spotlight of public attention. It will induce self-consciousness in almost any beginner, just as will a maiden speech. Which brings us to another point: In addition to ignoring your fears and arousing your desire to speak, open up and spread yourself. Get excited, and let your excitement take over.

Those few points comprised the general philosophy that I applied during the first year of teaching public speaking. But results were not good enough, so I kept looking for improvements.

In searching for additional ideas, I asked a good many people to define self-consciousness. Most of them gave one of two answers: (1) It is an inferiority complex. (2) It is lack of self-confidence. Neither answer helped, so I started analyzing the problem for myself.

Let us adopt the most realistic approach. Assume that self-consciousness is exactly what it says it is—consciousness of you. Immediately this assumption leads to a theory that what makes you self-conscious is a tendency to think about yourself, to entertain fears and misgivings, and to wonder how well you'll do and whether you'll look like a fool in front of an audience, and so on. While your mind is thus engrossed, you are nervous and upset.

In other words, you are self-conscious because you are thinking about your own possible inadequacies and shortcomings. You confuse your thoughts by wondering whether people think your remarks or actions are silly. (In that sense, self-consciousness results from thinking negative thoughts and asking silent questions about your shortcomings.)

With that theory as a basis, I did some experimenting in class. I made close observations and discovered that the precise time a speaker appears most self-conscious is when he voices his fears and worries. If he tells his audience, "Boy, I'm nervous!" or "I forget what I was going to say," or "I don't know whether this speech is going to be any good," or anything else of that nature, his self-consciousness really takes possession. He is miserable. At that moment, his blood pressure rises and his nervousness increases. His self-consciousness reaches an apex for the simple reason that he is devoting exclusive attention to himself, to his fears and his worries.

I started using this knowledge to create a formula: Stop thinking about yourself. Supplant your negative thoughts with positive ones. This will force self-consciousness out of your system.

Of course you can't blank out your mind. It will busy itself with something, even against your will. So the way to get rid of self-conscious thoughts is to replace them with dynamic and interesting thoughts with enough attraction to hold your attention. Let those thoughts relate to something besides yourself. There are several ways of doing this.

Approach your listener thinking about your subject instead of your fears. Tie your thoughts to the importance of the topic you are getting ready to discuss. Turn that topic over in your mind. Study the phraseology you intend to use. Then you will have something useful to engage your brain, something with helpful bearing on the job in hand. You will help eliminate consideration of yourself and reduce likelihood that you will be possessed by fears and worries. If you carry this procedure far enough, you will lose consciousness of yourself entirely. Your mind will be so absorbed in your subject that you won't have any spare attention to support self-consciousness.

So the next procedure for dealing with self-consciousness is to shut it out of your mind by giving your brain something else to do. Quite obviously, this procedure also applies to private conversations as well as public talks.

One day, in relation to this course development work, I made a surprising discovery. I awoke to sudden realization that I had mysteriously reached a new stage in my own growth, for I no longer felt any fear in the presence of an audience. This opened my eyes to a new concept: It *was* possible to eliminate self-consciousness completely.

One night I stood up in front of a preliminary audience. The audience consisted of men and women who were mak-

ing up their minds whether they would enroll for the course. To my surprise I found myself saying that I was just as much at home on that platform as anywhere else on earth, that it was entirely possible to overcome fear of an audience, and that I had learned this by personal experience. I did hedge a bit by saying I was unwilling to guarantee that this would happen to everybody who joined the class, but that I felt anybody could expect to have it happen to him sooner or later if he kept on making enough speeches. Nevertheless, thinking it over afterward, I concluded that even with that qualification I had made some strong statements.

The next day I unexpectedly acquired additional material for analysis. Casually I turned on the radio and out came the Voice of Experience. Because I preferred music, I reached over to adjust the dial. But the speaker's first few words arrested my hand, caused me to hesitate and listen. "There is no known remedy for stage fright," he said. "The person who claims he has overcome his fear of an audience is a liar—." That last word particularly caught my attention, because in view of what I had said the previous evening, it obviously would apply to me. He did go on to make it a little milder, however, by adding, "—or else he's as rare as California weather."

Then he continued with a remarkably illuminating series of statements: "Everybody who knows me, who has heard me speak, realizes that during the first two minutes before an audience I stand there nervous, rubbing my hands together, swallowing a succession of lumps that rise in my throat. I'm in misery. But after the opening distress I begin to lose myself in my subject. I forget my fears and misgivings, and start feeling comfortable. All that stage fright vanishes."

These few sentences furnish some interesting commentaries on the problem of self-consciousness. Here was a man

of broad experience who should know what he was talking about.

Taking his statements apart, we find that they are mutually self-contradictory. First, he said *there is no known remedy for stage fright*. Then, in effect, he went on to add that *one remedy for stage fright is to keep on talking for two minutes*, until you lose yourself in your speech. This suggested the question, "How can you gain emotional freedom without first talking for two minutes, so that you can get started right in the first place?"

A very practical answer is this: Just before starting to talk, think through the first two minutes of your intended remarks. Get excited about them. Lose yourself in them. Let them possess your whole attention. Capture in advance the state of mind that normally comes only after you have been talking for two minutes.

All this has a familiar ring to experienced public speakers. They will tell you that a speaker suffers really serious torment only during the earliest part of his talk. After that, if the speaker's experience has been sufficient to develop emotional control, he becomes absorbed by his topic. He remains conscious only of what he is saying. The same principle will apply whether he is talking to a thousand people or to just one personal friend.

The foregoing ideas are worth much further development than they have been given. That development will, at least to some extent, be realized in later volumes. For the present, however, it is sufficient to say that with their application to classroom problems, I really began to make progress in overcoming students' self-consciousness. Almost at once, encouraging reports started coming from a good many people. After their first three or four meetings, many students had lost their fears and misgivings. Quite a few of them also reported that by conquering the public speaker's timidity,

they had destroyed their fear of people under other circumstances as well. Such statements were made by men and women who said that all their lives they had been victims of such fear during private conversation and had considered it impossible to overcome.

Now let us apply this subject matter to some of the other problems of life.

If you will think back over your past experiences, remembering the times you have suffered from self-consciousness, you will immediately realize that you were nervous only when you were concerned about yourself, or about the impressions you were making. Some conditions have invited more trouble than others. Possibly your self-consciousness was at its worst when you approached another person with a proposal or idea having primary interest for yourself. Most likely trouble reached its peak precisely when you most needed to make a good impression—and knew it.

Take, for example, the question of applying for a job.

“What,” I once asked a personnel manager, “do you consider the most evident personality weakness of the average man or woman who enters your office seeking employment?”

He answered: “Self-consciousness.”

“And how,” I went on, “does that condition influence you in forming judgments of those people?”

“It confronts me with two possible problems,” he said. “First, if the position to be filled calls for confidence and poise, the self-conscious applicant clearly disqualifies himself. His problem is easy to handle, because unsureness in the presence of others is easy to detect. The second problem is more complicated.

“Where self-consciousness will not interfere with success on the job, it is no barrier to employment. Nevertheless, it works to the applicant’s disadvantage in his efforts to sell himself. He is likely to make a confused presentation, leav-

ing out important points. So I try to put him at ease. At the same time, I ask questions that will help disclose essential information. I also try to make allowance for this emotional condition when forming a judgment."

"Then self-consciousness," I said, "tends to prevent a person from getting a job calling for self-confidence. It also interferes with his efforts to sell himself into any job, whether the job calls for self-confidence or not." The personnel manager nodded agreement. "And also," I went on, "when other factors are equal, the person with self-consciousness normally loses out to one with poise and self-assurance."

"That," he replied, "is usually true."

The same principle applies in other departments of life. A self-conscious person seldom gets an even break in his dealings with people. He creates an impression of weakness. He encounters difficulty in organizing and expressing his thoughts. He calls attention to his deficiencies and omits ideas that would advance his cause. So it is decidedly advantageous to overcome any such condition.

There is a special reason why self-consciousness will usually arise during an employment interview. Necessarily, the applicant puts himself and his virtues on parade. Instinctively, he tends to minimize and conceal his shortcomings. Because he is keenly aware of those shortcomings, because he is compelled to consider and perhaps discuss them during the interview, much of his attention is turned directly to the holes in his own armor. And that, for reasons we have already discussed, is like sending self-consciousness an engraved invitation to walk in and make itself at home.

There are ways, however, of minimizing such trouble.

One easy method is to take the other fellow's viewpoint instead of your own. Look at the subject as through his eyes and you will become more objective, more self-assured. There is usually a way of doing this and it will pay to find it.

Here, for example, are two different ways of saying the same thing in an employment interview: (1) "I have had four years of experience in handling the kind of work you want done. I gained that experience under a prominent leader in the field. He gave me thorough training, so I think I should be just about the sort of candidate you want." This presentation is from the applicant's point of view. It directs the speaker's attention to himself, but that would be less true in the example that follows. (2) "You are probably looking for somebody with practical experience, trained under an expert who really knows his field. Such an expert is Harrison Jones. For four years I was his personal assistant." This presentation is from the employer's point of view. To that extent, it directs the speaker's attention away from himself.

Isn't it easy to see how the second treatment reduces danger? Which brings us to another valuable rule: *Divert your thoughts and words from channels that invite you to be self-conscious.*

There are two obvious ways of accomplishing this diversion. The first way is to abstain from talking about yourself, but if you do this you will lose many conversational opportunities. So you will more likely be attracted by the second method. It is to shy away from your areas of exceptional sensitivity, and, even though discussing yourself, to avoid discussing what directly invites self-consciousness. In the following conversation, the speaker again and again expresses himself in words that invite his own self-consciousness. His most serious invitations to self-consciousness are in *italics*.

"Recently," said the speaker, "a news item told of a brutal murder. It happened late in the evening. The driver of a car was waiting for a green light. A thug opened the door on the driver's side, stuck a gun in his ribs, pushed in beside him

and drove off. Half an hour later, out in the country, for no reason at all, he shot the poor guy."

No direct invitations to self-consciousness as yet, but wait.

*"Anybody who tries that on me will get hurt. I won't react the way that fellow did. He was a chump. He just moved over and did what he was told, but I wouldn't. Instead, I'd do the unexpected thing. I'd swing around and jam my knee in the intruder's stomach, throw him out, and pin him to the street, flat on his back.*

A listener reminded the speaker that the thug was carrying a gun.

*"Well, maybe the victim didn't have much choice. Gee I'd hate to take that! But maybe he didn't have to. Rather than lose my life, I'd give up the car. I'd slide out of the other door and let the thug have the old wagon!"*

Running through that conversation are thoughts put into words that bring on self-consciousness. Mixed with them are indications of superiority and braggadocio, or perhaps of inferiority covering itself up—any of which would invite trouble.

You can keep clear of invitations to self-consciousness by refusing to consider or discuss yourself, and especially to evaluate yourself in the process. Such forbearance will give you an additional advantage: You avoid both diffidence and conceit. After all, feelings of inferiority or superiority are really just negative or positive self-consciousness.

In this connection, remember that either diffidence or conceit will appear to the other fellow as an undesirable personality trait. Most diffidence or conceit really springs from a tendency to make comparisons between yourself and others, favorable or otherwise, whether the objects of such comparisons are present or not. Therefore diffidence and conceit are easy to avoid. Just don't fall into the trap of thinking in

comparative terms unless you know you can do it without inviting trouble.

One more subject calls for attention, and that is the problem of how you are going to get started with the regimen we have been discussing.

It is mostly during the conversational gaps that self-consciousness grips you, when you are not talking but are wondering what to say. If ideas refuse to flow, your misery will increase. But, as with speechmaking, when you actually plunge into discussion your trouble evaporates. Then you are not even conscious of the fact that you are no longer self-conscious.

If you are accustomed to experience self-consciousness, it would probably surprise you to know how many of the people you meet feel exactly the same way as you do. Often you think they are smarter than you, but they're not. They're just scared, the same as you. Only they're putting up a better bluff than you are. Do the same thing yourself.

Go out looking for opportunities to invite and dispel your timidity. Get into a situation calling for conversation. Disregard your reticence. Start casting about for a suitable topic. Look for something that will take your mind away from yourself. Hinge its primary interest and treatment on your listener. Think about him, instead of yourself, as you talk. Open up and let yourself go; lose yourself in your ideas. After twenty efforts of that sort, self-consciousness will cease to be so important in your conversations.

You will improve most rapidly if you keep remembering that the other fellow has fears of his own. Help him to overcome them, and you'll more quickly reduce your own. Put him at ease by taking the initiative yourself.

Now here, in summary form, are the procedures we have discussed:

(1) Ignore your fears and act as though you are already confident. Plunge ahead and do the thing you naturally seek to avoid. Then fear will diminish. (2) Get the habit of speaking up. Once you have formed this habit, don't let it go into decay. (3) Instead of stifling your urges to talk, arouse them. Gratify them. Gain full advantage of the excitement they provide. (4) Take the brakes off your inhibitions. Open up and let yourself go. Get excited, and let your excitement take over. (5) Don't ask silent questions about your own inadequacies. Stop thinking about yourself. Instead, engage your mind in other matters. Force self-consciousness out of your system. (6) Consider your subject. Get your ideas lined up. Load your brain with useful work. (7) Think through the first two minutes of your remarks. Get the frame of mind you would normally acquire only after you have actually started. In an emotional sense, begin there. (8) Take the other fellow's point of view. Become more objective and self-assured by looking at the subject as through his eyes. (9) Divert your thoughts and words from topics that invite self-consciousness. Think and talk less about yourself. (10) Don't evaluate yourself mentally as you talk. Refuse inwardly to compare yourself with other people, whether they are present or not. (11) Seek chances to invite and dispel timidity. Help others to overcome their timidity by starting conversations yourself. There is no easier way to bring your fears under control.

Practice these rules again and again. As your emotional stability improves, you will gain another quality essential to self-confidence which, important as it is, we have scarcely mentioned at all. It is the sureness of touch that comes from knowing you possess high conversational skill—and can rely on it.

## Chapter 14

### *Finding a Satisfactory Topic*

CHAUNCEY DEWITT stood up in class to make his first speech. Before the rows of expectant faces, he quailed in a paroxysm of fear. His mind went blank.

"Just remember what you intended to say," I told him, "and say it. Start right in!"

Chauncey opened and closed his mouth. No sound came forth. He turned the color of an old newspaper. I thought he was going to faint. Then I began to ask questions.

"Do you play baseball?"

"No."

"Did you ever play football?"

"No."

"Have you a hobby?"

"No."

This went on through several more questions. Chauncey's unvarying answers continued to be "No." Although good-looking, young, and unmarried, he even disclaimed interest in girls.

Then I hit on the right combination.

"Do you drive a car?"

"Yes."

Here was the beginning of action, so I went on. "Did you ever have an accident?"

"Yes."

"Where did it happen?"

"Out on the Boulevard." Here were four words in a row.

"Was your car badly damaged?"

A light of excitement flashed from his eyes. "I'll say! It rolled over three times!" Now I could breathe more easily.

"Start at the beginning," I said, "and tell us what happened."

The words, so long dammed up, came tumbling forth. When the timekeeper called a halt at the end of two minutes, Chauncey's outpouring was just reaching its height. Only with considerable reluctance did he stop.

This illustrates two points: First, that it is hard to start talking when you haven't thought of anything you want to say, and second, that it is easy when you have. The real problem is to find a good lead idea. Get an idea that gets you!

Do not fool yourself by imagining that you are the only person who has trouble dreaming up subjects of conversation. Most people have just as much trouble as you do. Chauncey's experience only shows, in exaggerated form, what most of us face on repeated occasions throughout our lives.

Practically any topic you can think of is used every day by thousands of people for the sole purpose of making conversation. There are so many conceivable subjects that their very profusion is upsetting. The trouble we face in our moments of confusion, when we are unable to find a suitable starting point, is our failure to take the necessary mental steps. Only a few techniques are needed to get you started at any moment on short notice.

One of the easiest ways to stimulate your ideas is to have somebody ask you leading questions, as I did with Chauncey DeWitt. This is seldom practical, but there is an effective substitute. Just ask those questions silently of yourself. Try it a few times, and see what happens.

Here are a few typical questions that will help you start a conversation with anybody you know: Have I heard a good story lately? Can I contribute a piece of useful information? What did we discuss the last time we met? Have I had an experience he would like to hear about? What are the topics in which he is interested? Have I recently seen some mutual friend? By asking such questions as these, you prime your mental pump.

There is a valuable short cut to this procedure. It runs: Who, when, where, what, why, how? Turn those six words over in your mind when casting about for a conversational lead. You will probably bring immediate order into your processes of thought.

Sometimes it will help if you mentally build each of those words into a complete question: *Who* has done something to arouse this fellow's interest? *When* did we last get together? *Where* do we usually see each other? *What* can I tell him that he would be glad to hear? *Why* am I glad to see him? *How* can I make him laugh? Asking yourself such questions as these, just as they come to mind, will likely turn up a suitable lead so that you can start talking at once.

Instead of asking yourself questions, you can think back to your past experiences in search of a suitable idea. Recall a recent interesting conversation. Remember an item you have read. Recall the other fellow's special interest, something you have heard him say, any experience you have shared with him. Try to personalize your lead.

Or you can let lead ideas run through your mind at random. The following list indicates what a variety of lead subjects you have to choose from.

*The press:* newspapers, books, magazines.

*News:* births, deaths, fires, murders, accidents.

*Famous personalities:* actors, actresses, statesmen, leaders, writers, sportsmen, industrialists, scientists, inventors.

*Entertainment*: motion pictures, radio, theater, television.

*Sports*: baseball, football, wrestling, tennis, boxing, golf, swimming, hiking, racing.

*Hobbies*: gardening, painting, photography.

*Social activities*: dances, parties, clubs.

*National affairs*: government, politics, elections, law, unions, capitalism, socialism, communism.

*Places*: towns, cities, states, countries.

*Home*: family, children, relatives, friends, dreams, ambitions, hopes, fears, problems, wealth, health.

*Possessions*: automobiles, pianos, household equipment, clothing.

*Business*: manufactured products, advertising, publicity, commodities, companies, stores, distributors, wholesalers, occupations, jobs, industries.

*Education*: science, history, literature, religion.

And don't forget the weather!

You have noticed, no doubt, that the foregoing subjects tend to fall into categories. That is an element of this technique which you will find worth noting: To stimulate the flow of ideas, search one area at a time. It is easier, for example, to think of all the different household furnishings in your home if you mentally canvass one room after another. It is easier still if you take each room by sections. Use this knowledge to put system into your mental searches.

The next time you encounter an uncomfortable pause in conversation or feel called on to talk when you have nothing to say, use these methods of searching for a topic to get started: Ask yourself questions. Recall something you have heard or read. Or review the possibilities at random. Continue until you get what you need.

By thus giving your mind the task of fishing for ideas you will discover that you do have a topic on tap after all. It is astonishing how many concealed ideas you can bring out

even when you are at first convinced that your brain is devoid of them.

It is easy to practice these routines when you are not engaged in conversation. If you have trouble developing ideas on the spur of the moment, don't wait for actual need before deciding what they will be. Do your fishing ahead of time. Supply yourself in advance with three talking points—one that you intend to use and two for spares. Lodge them in your mind and you will have several bits of talk for use with different people. Spread them over several days, then look for more.

In applying these techniques, it will help you to realize that there are three general areas of conversational opportunity: (1) You and your own areas of interest, which might, however, invite self-consciousness; (2) the experiences and interests of your listener; and (3) all those subjects of general interest that appeal to practically anybody.

Possibly the lead subjects in the foregoing list represent the safest kind of conversational material. They may seem difficult because they apparently demand specialized knowledge that you do not think you possess. But you garner information every day—from personal observation and from books, magazines, newspapers, the radio, and motion pictures—and so you can easily make additions to your conversational repertoire. Do not imagine that what you select will necessarily be old stuff to everybody. It is astonishing how many details most people overlook. When two people have seen the same movie or read the same news, they have a basis of discussion. Besides providing you with information, what you see or read provokes original ideas of your own, and they are likely to make for interesting talk.

On the other hand, if you can specialize in one topic, that will be to your advantage. By gaining exceptional insight into some particular subject, the pursuit of which you thor-

oughly enjoy, you will equip yourself with material for discussion that can be introduced in different groups. Possibly you already have a specialty without realizing it. Maybe you don't consider yourself an authority on anything, but on the subject of your own experiences and interests you are the best authority on earth. You should also be an authority on the interests of your relatives, your friends, and your associates. In addition, you are probably an authority on a fairly wide range of other subjects—for instance, any radio program to which you listen regularly, a book that you consider outstanding, a newspaper or magazine article that you found exceptionally illuminating. You certainly possess authoritative information on some subject. The trick is to find it—and use it well.

## Chapter 15

### *Remembering a Sequence of Points*

BEFORE discussing the subject of this chapter, perhaps I should prepare you for a shock. What is to come is fantastic. Two of my editors have asked me to omit it. They say it will overstrain your imagination. They say it will make you wonder whether I should visit a psychiatrist. Maybe I should. But not because of what you will read in this chapter.

Whether these techniques are fantastic or not is beside the point. They work. They will enable you to lodge ideas in your mind quite painlessly, with little expenditure of time. They will enable you to recall those ideas an hour or a day later, and do it with little effort. That ability is worth having.

Often a conversation will develop in a natural way. How to help that development along will be the subject of the chapter that follows. But unless you can lay out your points ahead of time, fix them in your mind and "forget" them, then later recall them without confusion, there are important kinds of conversational ability that you will never develop.

Perhaps you have not thought of the wisdom of preparing a conversation as you would plan a speech. But these two forms of expression are really very similar. What works for one is likely to work for the other. And there are at least two circumstances under which advance planning may be

useful: (1) when you have an important reason for wanting to cover a definite sequence of points; and (2) when you want to free your mind for experimenting with other elements of conversational technique.

You have been told to maintain a constant lookout for attractive and useful conversational material. You have been advised to pick up lead ideas from newspapers, magazines, books, motion pictures, radio programs, and also from conversations with others. You realize that having a good lead idea and a series of points to support it will do much to improve your self-assurance. But while reading the previous chapter, you probably wondered how you can remember what you pick up. You are about to learn a method that works.

These techniques depend on the memory principles given in Chapter 7, for remembering people's names. You will again rely on the fact that vivid mental images are easier to recall than abstract ideas, but you will apply those principles in a very different way. About the method of applying them, I intend to be very specific. That is why you will get such a shock.

Here is a brief description of one of the techniques: After choosing the points you want to remember from an article, convert each salient feature into a spectacular key word. See that each key word is directly associated with the idea it is intended to represent. Choose key words that you can visualize. Then link your key words together in a chain of mental images. Interlock them into such a sequence that each key word will somehow suggest its successor. This may sound complicated, but with a little practice it is easy to do.

You may feel obliged to be very high-minded about your choice of images. Don't do it. If you want to develop speed, you had better learn to accept the first practical image that comes along. Using it will save you time—and if you can't

lodge your points in mind in a series of split seconds, human nature is such that you won't do it at all.

Let's have an example. Suppose you have decided to base a conversation on the principles of memory themselves. Just use some of the material given in Chapter 7, and see what we get.

The first step in remembering a name, you will recall, is to get the name correctly. A good key word might be "ear." Form, in your mind, the image of an ear. Put a cupped hand behind it, to indicate that the ear is straining to catch the sound of a name. The second step, after getting the name correctly, is to fix the name in your mind. Let this idea be represented by a paper weight. Make that paper weight the size of an anvil, big enough to pin down the name for all time. Then rest this anvil paper weight on the ear which you are using as a symbol for the first point.

As your third point, perhaps you will select the idea that the name should be lodged in your memory by repetition. Let this idea be represented by a sledge hammer making repeated strokes against the anvil-sized paper weight, each stroke beating out a new repetition. You don't need to have a man swinging the sledge hammer. It is more spectacular if the sledge hammer swings itself; you will more likely remember it.

For your fourth point, form an image to indicate that you should call the person by name two or three times immediately after you meet him. Visualize a mouth in the head of the sledge hammer. Have that mouth speak the name as the hammer moves up and down. For your fifth point, select the idea that you should think about the name and notice whether it is unusual. Now this is getting even more ridiculous—and consequently safer. Visualize that mouth opening and sticking out its tongue, with a brain attached to the end of the tongue.

And finally, for your sixth point, you will recall that the name should be worked into your network of previous associations. Capture this idea by expanding the imaginary brain to the size of a watermelon, at the same time showing a network of lines in its surface. There you have a set of nonsense images that will enable you to remember all six points. See whether you can recall them now.

I do not pretend that the foregoing combination of images is anything but ridiculous. I made it up on the spur of the moment, while dictating this manuscript. Later, I could recall it in detail, and I will also be able to recall it tomorrow or next week. It will give me the represented sequence of points, in the event that I happen to find them useful as conversational material. With a little practice, you can use the same technique just as easily. And here is another memory technique that will enable you to remember a sequence of points:

Give yourself a set of symbols to represent the numbers from one to ten. Those symbols will be easy to remember if you make them rhyme with the numbers; use symbols suggested by the old childhood verse beginning "One, two, buckle my shoe."

Here are such symbols: one, sun; two, shoe; three, tree; four, door; five, hive; six, stick; seven, heaven; eight, gate; nine, vine; ten, hen. Commit those symbols to memory. Learn to rattle them off, without making mistakes, as rapidly as you can count from one to ten. Then convert each symbol into a visual image. Concentrate on each image long enough to fix it in your mind.

1. See the *sun*, a great orange disk descending over the horizon.
2. Picture the *shoe* in which lived the old woman with her many children.
3. Select a *tree* that stands out in your mind as a landmark.
4. Visualize your own front *door*.
5. Picture the hemisphere of an old-fashioned straw *beehive*;

see the bees angrily buzzing around it. 6. Maybe you'd like to use a golf *stick* for number six. 7. Form your own image of *heaven*; no one else can define that for you. 8. Imagine the *gate* on a bank vault, the one before your own front door, or some other which has special meaning to you. 9. See a *vine* growing up over a trellis or a porch. 10. Finally put the image of a *hen* into your mind; see her in her nest, angrily protesting your intrusion.

Each of these ten symbols can easily be associated with the image of an idea you would like to remember. A different idea can be associated with each symbol, thus enabling you to recall the entire sequence. More than one idea can be associated with each symbol, or you can increase the number of symbols by adding symbols of your own. Thus you can increase the number of ideas that you can remember by this device.

Once I made a speech that included 120 points. All of them, hooked to these ten symbols, were committed to memory in twelve minutes—an average of only six seconds for each point. Since I have reason to consider myself the possessor of a poor memory for any such purpose, it is probable that you can do as well—with equivalent practice.

Let's see how this device works by applying it to ten duties that you might reasonably be called on to perform tomorrow. I'll just pick them at random.

(1) Mail a letter. See the *sun* perched on top of the letter box at the nearest street corner. Burn that image into your mind, and go on. (2) Get the car greased. Picture your favorite gasoline station with its grease rack, but replace the building with the old woman's *shoe*. Pause long enough to be sure you have it. (3) Buy a newspaper. Picture the *tree* with a profusion of newspapers growing on it. For good measure, put a hollow in the trunk and stick a bundle of newspapers into the opening. Pause and get it. (4) Get

your watch repaired. Put a knocker on your image of the *door*, and visualize your watch under that knocker. Mentally crack the knocker down hard; ruin the watch forever. You won't forget that. (5) Cash a check. See a slot in the top of the *beehive*. Have the bees drop money into that slot—along with an occasional check. (6) Buy an ash tray. Picture the ash tray on a golf tee. Mentally hit it with the golf *stick*. (7) Buy a cigar. See that cigar standing as an obelisk in the center of *heaven*. (8) Get a box of candy. Imagine pieces of candy impaled on a row of spikes along the top of the *gate*. (9) Get a haircut. See many pairs of scissors growing from the *vine*; put action into the picture by having those scissors snap at passing insects. (10) Buy a bottle of medicine. Mentally pry open the *hen's* beak with a spoon while you pour the medicine down her throat.

Now see how easily you can remember these points. Go over the ten symbols in your mind. Recapture the image of each symbol. See what flashes into your mind along with the symbol. When you must, rack your brain for a moment until you get the right idea.

On repeated occasions I have taken a list of ten or more ideas called out at random by members of various audiences, and, despite my poor memory, have never failed to call off each idea correctly a little later—although no other person present could do it. Try it on your friends. But when you do, add this wrinkle: Have somebody write each idea on a piece of paper when it is originally mentioned. Because this will take time, you will have more opportunity to be deliberate about fixing each idea in your mind. Then announce that it would be too easy to call off the resulting list of ideas in their numerical sequence. Instead, have somebody call the numbers out of sequence, at random, and ask the list-maker to check off each idea as you correctly supply it.

You will find that you can remember your ideas in any sequence, forward or backward, with little or no difficulty, as the numbers are called. You will very likely find that no matter how the ideas are rearranged, you will not get caught if the same number is called twice. Try it, and see.

This device has a good many applications. It is useful in remembering the points of a speech, in lining up key ideas you intend to put over in a sales talk, or in preparing for any other kind of conversation. Don't be thrown off the track by the fact that the device is silly. No doubt it is. Its only virtue is that it works. Because it works, it will enable you to do easily what most people can do only with difficulty. You will be able to do it in snatches of time that would be wholly inadequate to the problem of fixing a sequence of points in your mind by the conventional method of repetition. Therefore it has the effect of enabling you to do what most people cannot do at all.

Now let's outline a practical plan for digesting what we have covered.

The ideal place to practice conversation, of course, is out among people. But the ideal place to plan for such practice is off by yourself. Run through the foregoing procedures when you are alone, as a means of stimulating your ability, and you will shortly acquire surprising skill.

Here is a good working routine.

Mentally review a series of conversational leads. Think of possible topics, one after another, as rapidly as you can. Don't try to be brilliant about it; just see how many leads you can get. In relation to each, try to remember some piece of information or recent experience that might provide good conversational material. As soon as you get a good lead, jot it down on paper. Continue until you have collected six or eight possibilities for actual use.

Select one of these possibilities. Choose one that arouses your interest. Develop a simple outline for a presentation on that topic. Don't try to write out your presentation in detail; just give yourself a series of key ideas that you would probably want to cover in dealing with the topic. In doing this, you will really be taking your time about what you would be compelled to do rapidly and on short notice under the stress of an actual conversation.

Then consider your subject matter in relation to various people you know. Ask yourself who would be interested in it. See how you can modify it somewhat, so that it will more effectively be related to the interests and experiences of the various people to whom you might present it.

Another interesting experiment is to search a magazine article for the elements of a conversation. Read the article carefully. Underscore its key ideas, so that you will later be able to pick them out. Lodge each key idea in your mind, using one of the techniques described in this chapter. Lay the magazine aside while you recall the points, getting them in proper sequence. Then check yourself to see how well you did. Practice until the habit of trying has become fixed.

## Chapter 16

### *Developing a Conversational Lead*

DURING the past twenty years I have listened to many thousands of speeches. Some were poor, but some were mighty good. When I consider which of those speeches were outstanding, I recall a strange paradox: One of the finest talks I have ever heard was a speech delivered by a beginner.

The speaker told his audience about his only previous effort to make a public talk—an effort which had completely failed. "I couldn't utter one word," he said. Yet he went from that failure to a pinnacle of success in just one step. Why? Largely because his first effort involved difficulties he was not prepared for, while his second effort didn't. Let me tell you the story.

Ralph Jackson was an industrial engineer. One evening he attended a banquet. During the dinner, Ralph took part in a spirited discussion with the man seated at his left. Later that man turned out to be one of the scheduled speakers. A question-and-answer period followed this man's talk. In the midst of it, Ralph was astonished to hear him say: "During the course of the dinner Mr. Jackson expounded some remarkable ideas on the application of engineering methods to the problem we are now discussing. His comments impressed me so much that I am going to ask him to let us all hear them."

The speaker turned to Ralph, who gaped in horror. He

was nonplused. But the audience began to applaud. Somebody shouted, "Speech!" Others took up the cry.

Ralph tried to arise but couldn't. His table companions on each side grasped his elbows and lifted him to his feet. When their support was withdrawn, he promptly sat down. But the applause and demand for his talk continued. Under the stimulus of repeated urgings, he managed to get up again.

Ralph looked out over his audience. His mind seemed paralyzed. Then a confusion of ideas filled his head, but he couldn't decide where to begin. After a few moments of bewilderment he had taken all he could bear. He turned his back to his audience and walked from the room.

I learned all this from the speech Ralph made only a few weeks later at the first session of a public speaking course. His presentation was superb. What could account for such an extraordinary improvement? The answer to that question contains a valuable lesson.

The speech requested at that banquet called for specialized knowledge possessed by Ralph Jackson, but it also demanded careful organization of thought. By its nature, that talk would have been complicated to prepare and deliver. Under sudden emotional stress, Ralph could not organize his thoughts quickly enough to pick out a lead idea and get started.

But in his second effort, all Ralph had to do was to remember what happened to him in the first one, start at the beginning, and tell about it in chronological sequence. His talk organized itself. No important detail escaped his memory.

"Probably you could wake up at three o'clock any morning," I said to him, "and remember that experience, step by step."

Ralph made a wry face. "You'd be surprised how many times I already have!" he said.

The foregoing story illustrates a principle that applies just as much to conversation as to speechmaking. It is easy to develop a lead idea that describes an actual happening. Talk about something you did, something you observed, or something you heard about. Start at the beginning and follow the sequence of events until you come to the end. Actual happenings are sure-fire material for either a conversation or a speech.

I have used the knowledge gained from Ralph Jackson's talk many times. In helping a beginning student to get started I would say, "Tell us how you get up in the morning. Begin with the ringing of your alarm clock, then describe what you do. Just follow the sequence of your normal routine. To make it interesting, tell us how you feel at each step."

In following this advice, the novice is relieved of all necessity to construct his talk. His remarks organize themselves. His mind is free to consider his choice of words and to improve his effectiveness in expressing them. I have never heard a dull or uninteresting talk based on that formula. On the contrary, many of them have attained high favor with their listeners.

When your conversation is about an actual happening you are helped by the fact that all your life you have been describing your experiences and making observations on them. Your performance is therefore based on lifelong practice. Three considerations, however, call for careful attention: (1) Select an occurrence that will interest your listener—as it usually will if it has interested you. (2) Keep him interested by your choice of detail and by omitting what is irrelevant. (3) Introduce colorful side lights.

Take, for example, an account of a fire. If you have ever had the experience of telling about fires you have witnessed, you know that the details are hard to forget. You can string

them together almost without effort. Your memory parades them in proper sequence, and all you have to do is to convert your memory into words. It is difficult to get off the track.

If you leave out too many details, your story will be only a skeleton. It will lack fullness and color. You can avoid this by including every important detail in its place. You can build up your story by interpreting details, bringing to light their underlying meanings, drawing inferences from them, and surrounding them with imagination. But make sure that each detail you include has interest.

Stimulate your own interest by recapturing the original flavor and spectacularity of the event you describe. That will make it easy to hold the other fellow's attention. It will also help you to develop your story with enthusiasm. Your mounting excitement, as you live over an experience in the telling of it, will help you to make your story dramatic and enjoyable.

Let's put the foregoing suggestions into practice.

"Several weeks ago there was a fire around the corner from my home. Although the engines came promptly and the firemen worked diligently, the building was utterly destroyed."

There is the skeleton of a story. It was purposely told with little imagination, yet it contains the essential facts. But now I am going to draw on memory and ingenuity. Let's see how the story can be expanded into a conversation piece. In expanding it, I shall add only one new element of construction that has not been discussed in foregoing chapters—an introductory remark intended to help capture attention and arouse interest.

"Recently I found out how fast a frame building, like my house and possibly yours, can be destroyed by fire. I stepped into my back yard to do a bit of weeding and heard the crackling of fire. At first I thought that somebody was burn-

ing brush, but it would have taken a mountain of brush to produce such sharp bursting sounds. I looked across neighboring yards and saw a rising pillar of flames. Instantly I knew what was burning.

"It was an enchanting little two-story, green-and-yellow frame cottage, too small for a residence, yet much too large to be a doll house. I had never known its original purpose, but it had once housed a flock of chickens and had recently been used for storage purposes.

"My first reaction was to consider it a shame to destroy anything so charming. My next reaction was that I had better do something. I was about to turn in an alarm, when I heard the fire siren's shrill wail. I speculated on what would be left by the time the apparatus arrived. Every shingle and clapboard in the cottage was afame.

"There was nothing I could do, so I stood and watched, wondering how the fire could have got so far so soon in a well-populated neighborhood and thinking that the same thing could happen to my house. Then I heard the fire trucks coming down the pike. They arrived just ahead of an influx of pedestrians and automobiles.

"Four hoses from a single pumper were soon producing streams of water out of all proportion to the diminutive house. One of the hoses burst, but despite this the fire was extinguished with astonishing rapidity. Not even a wisp of smoke curled skyward. Only a charred ruin remained—and trampled grass and flowers in all the nearby yards."

As I reflect on this story of the fire, additional details come to mind, which I could use on retelling it, some being descriptive and some expository. I might, for instance, suggest precautions that one should take to protect one's property. I have only to pick and choose what I will use to advance my story.

Among additional details that occur to me are the calm efficiency of our local volunteer firemen, the size of the crowd and the number of my friends in it, the importance of sounding an alarm at the earliest possible moment, the satisfaction in realizing that the fire was well removed from my own house, the number of automobile drivers who cannot resist following fire trucks, the thought that it might be wise for me to install fire extinguishers at home, the recollection of other fires I have seen.

Obviously this itemizing could go on and on. It shows how the effort to exert ingenuity and tap your imagination can cause each idea to spawn two or three more ideas. Getting more ideas than you can use is good business; it lets you pick and choose your next step. Habitually giving yourself a large selection will make it surprisingly easy to develop any story into interesting conversational material.

Here is a practical formula that will help you gain experience with the foregoing routine:

(1) Recall a spectacular event—a fire, an accident, a game, a contest, an argument, a quarrel, or an interesting problem—any event that can be made to provide conversational material. (2) Jot down its essential elements in chronological sequence, allowing space between items. (3) Go back over the event and see if there are gaps that could be filled with additional details. Continue until you get a complete working outline. (4) See whether you have included any uninteresting and unnecessary items. If you have, cross them out. (5) Reorganize the remaining points to get a smooth flow. (6) Commit the outline to memory. (7) Look for opportunities in which to use the outline in conversation. Slip it in so that your listener will not notice that you are practicing on him.

Present your intentionally developed conversation piece while talking to different people. Each time, notice whether

you cover all your points. Compare each presentation with preceding ones. Notice whether your presentation has improved. By thus repeating the same story, with occasional embellishments or eliminations, you will gain a good view of your ability and progress. After you have thus worn out one subject, select another and follow through with the same routine.

Conscientious pursuit of this practice will probably do more to improve your conversational ability than any other method you have ever tried. As you progress, you can become less formal about it. Discard the pencil and make up the outline in your head. Then try making up the outline as you go along. As a matter of fact you can gain much of the same advantage if you simply make it point to tell each really interesting story over and over to different people, with the same principles in mind.

Now let us summarize what has been said and add a new element to this technique.

Every conversational topic starts with a lead idea in the speaker's mind. The topic is suggested by something he sees or hears, or by some recollection or reflection that arises among his thoughts. Because the topic stirs his interest, he thinks it will do the same for his listeners. So he pounces on it. In any one of several ways he converts it into spoken words.

He may state the idea as it occurred to his mind, and stop there. Or he may use it to start a series of related ideas that have a logical sequence. But before doing either, he may cast about for one or more introductory remarks chosen because they will create an effective setting for what he really intends to say. These introductory remarks may be used to capture attention, to arouse interest and curiosity, and to pave the way for what is to come. Effectively handled, they will get any conversation off to a good start.

Let us now consider what will come after the introductory remarks.

A chronological story, as we have seen, will free you from the problems of thought organization. Mixed in with your chronological story you may introduce side lights, implications, explanations, and interpretations. But sometimes your conversation will consist of abstract ideas rather than of events that you describe. If your topic of conversation is not basically a chronicle, you will need to depend on associative thinking and connect together a string of related ideas. You will need an artificial structure that you can rely on. For a formal speech you would plan the structure in advance, but for conversation that is seldom practical.

Often you can select a lead idea because you know it is surrounded by related ideas that you can draw on as they are needed. Perhaps you can line up three or four of the related ideas before you start talking. Sooner or later, however, you will exhaust this collection of material, and will then have to find more. With a little ingenuity, you can make the conversation generate its own continuity. As you present each idea, cast about for the one you are going to use next. Let it be suggested by what you are saying, and by your listener's evident reactions to what you have already said. Make sure that each new idea will be related to the topic, a thing you can usually accomplish just by drawing on the same area of consideration in which you found your lead idea at the outset. Thus you can let your story build itself up and provide substance for its own extension and growth. As this happens, you will discover that you know a great deal more about your topic than you thought you did.

Let us now consider a specific conversation. For purposes of simplification, we shall assume that the speaker does all the talking himself. This will make it necessary for him to start by conceiving a lead idea, to follow this by presenting

one or more introductory remarks before he gets into his subject, and then to present his lead idea and advance from it to a sequence of additional ideas that are suggested because they are related to each other and to what has gone before. Each paragraph will be preceded by a statement showing how its idea was conceived. Italicized portions will again indicate direct invitations to self-consciousness.

**I. INTRODUCTORY IDEA:**

"You were telling me about a little argument you had with a traffic cop several weeks ago, and how annoying it was."

**II. SECOND INTRODUCTORY IDEA:**

"Probably all our friends have had similar experiences. One always seems to come out on the losing end."

**III. THIRD INTRODUCTORY IDEA:**

"Well, I had such an experience yesterday, and I didn't make out too well, because I didn't have the courage to talk back."

**IV. LEAD IDEA:**

"I was driving up the boulevard on the way to dinner when I noticed that four policemen were flagging down all cars. One of them waved me to a halt, and I sat there and waited. Presently he walked over and asked for my owner's and driver's licenses, which, *after some confusion, I managed to show him.*"

**V. CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LEAD IDEA:**

"He looked at the cards, and then at me, *as though I were a criminal*, and proceeded to ask questions. He wanted to know how long I had been driving, and I said twenty-five years. He asked where I had started from that evening, and I pointed to the address on the license. He asked where I

was going, and I named the restaurant where I had reservations for dinner. Then he drilled holes in me with his eyes, *apparently trying to make me as uncomfortable as he could.* Then he abruptly told me to drive on."

#### VI. INFERENCE DRAWN BY THE SPEAKER:

*"Now, I'm not a criminal, and I don't think I look like one or act like one. But he treated me like one."*

#### VII. REASONING FROM THE LEAD IDEA TO PRESENT A CONTRAST BETWEEN THE EVENT AS IT WAS AND AS THE SPEAKER FELT IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN:

"During the next few miles I did a lot of thinking about that episode. I remembered that the cop had been distinctly unfriendly. He didn't use abusive language, but he certainly had a disagreeable look on his face. The least he could have done would have been to be friendly and mildly apologetic, in recognition of the fact that *I am a taxpayer.* Instead of dismissing me with evident regret over his inability to pin something on me, he could at least have said that everything was in order, and he could have thanked me for my trouble."

#### VIII. SIDE LIGHT OF A CONCLUSION AND SOME EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT IT:

"It seemed almost as though the civil authorities had trained their cops to adopt that attitude, because I noticed that all four of those officers were treating people with the same lack of consideration."

#### IX. SELECTING SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES AND REASONING FROM EACH TO A LOGICAL CONCLUSION:

"It would certainly be better if the police were taught to display good manners. They should be more like salesmen. They should have an understanding of how to get cooperation from people. They should inspire the public with con-

fidence in them. They should be protectors of the citizen, not intimidators."

#### X. SPEAKER'S REACTION TO EVENT:

*"All during the interrogation I tried to keep my emotional equilibrium, without getting angry. I tried to be friendly, even though the policeman wasn't. I don't think I am any more sensitive than most people, but that was a very disagreeable experience."*

#### XI. AN ILLUSTRATION RELATED TO THE LEAD IDEA:

*"Probably I didn't handle the situation as well as I should have. This morning my lawyer told me that I was excessively patient. He said that he would have shown his licenses and answered the first question, but after that he would have looked the cop in the eye and inquired, 'Do you have a warrant for my arrest?' To the officer's 'No,' he would have said, 'Well, if you don't have a warrant for my arrest, you have already exhausted your rights. You asked to see my licenses, and I showed them to you. They are in order, so you have done everything you can do. You have no right to put me under cross-examination, and I am leaving.' I don't know whether that was good advice or not."*

#### XII. A SECOND ILLUSTRATION RELATED TO THE LEAD IDEA:

*"This reminded me of the first experience I ever had with a traffic cop. He stopped me for passing a trolley car on the wrong side. He was friendly about it. He told me that he could see I was young, that probably I didn't know the law. He said, 'I'll explain it to you, so that you will always remember. That will help you to keep out of trouble.' Then he proceeded with his explanation. I remember passing that same policeman on the street ten years later, and I still felt so friendly about his consideration that I parked my car and walked back to talk with him. I*

reminded him of the incident, and his face lighted up like a Christmas tree. There was good feeling on both sides. It just goes to show that there is a right way and a wrong way to approach people."

This ends our discourse. It would be easy to go on to a third illustration related to the lead idea, involving, say, an encounter with a salesman, a railroad conductor, or a hotel clerk. Such an illustration, in turn, might offer a means of transition to another topic, such as the quality of the salesman's merchandise, the pleasures and vicissitudes of railroad travel, and unusual hotel accommodations.

It may at first puzzle you to notice that Part XII of the discourse shows no italics, even though the speaker was obviously talking about himself. It can be assumed that by the time he had got so far into his subject he was pretty well warmed up, and not so vulnerable to self-consciousness as he was at the outset. Though the conversation was personal in nature at the end, there was nothing subjective in the speaker's thought—nothing negative. There was little that would directly invite self-consciousness.

The foregoing example is designed to show the sort of definite mental steps that you can take in advancing a conversation. They should make it easy to develop a lead idea into the attractive conversational opportunity that it should afford. In taking each step, however, you will be confronted with various possible choices. Some will afford better conversational value than others. Let us consider the sort of choices that you might face, and to do this we shall develop another example.

Imagine that your lead idea springs from a motion picture you saw. You could simply state that you went to see it, give the title, and stop right there. That wouldn't provide much conversation, however, unless the other fellow picks up the topic and carries on. But you can easily furnish

yourself with additional material, and at the same time increase likelihood of arousing his participation. You can do it by searching out one or two preliminary ideas somehow relating the subject to his interests.

Let us say that the leading characters in the movie were supposed to be talking with a Swedish accent, and that you suddenly realize your listener is a Swede. At once you compare his accent with the accent in the movie. You decide that there is a marked difference. This leads to the obvious possibility that the movie's accent was incorrect. It also arouses curiosity about your friend's reaction to the movie's apparent distortion of his natural manner of talking. Instead of making the flat statement that you saw the movie, you are tempted to ask whether he saw it, and, if so, what he thought of the Swedish accent.

You would be likely to ask these two preliminary questions before even expressing your lead idea—that you had seen the movie yourself. Actually, your lead idea could be omitted entirely. Your conversation might run like this:

"Have you seen this movie, 'The Farmer's Daughter'?" Let us suppose he answers "Yes." Then you go on, "What did you think of the Swedish accent?" Suppose he says, "Well, it was an accent all right, but it didn't sound very Swedish." You could continue, "*I saw that picture myself last night, and that's what I thought.*"

The italics in the last sentence call attention to a direct invitation to self-consciousness. You are calling both your own and your listener's attention to yourself—by talking *about* yourself. If you had followed your initial impulse, and started with this idea, you would have invited self-consciousness with your very first sentence. By casting about for an introductory idea, however, you found something that caught your listener's attention and you got off to a better start.

Just as you used your lead idea as a stimulus for searching out introductory thoughts, you can also make it serve the purpose of indicating what should follow, for each idea tends to suggest succeeding ones. The succeeding ideas may take the form of related concepts, examples, inferences, conclusions, or new topics. You could not possibly discover them all, but thinking of more than you will need gives you the advantage of a good selection from which to choose. Preliminary planning will help, but you will have to do most of your thinking as you go along. Unless you do such thinking, you cannot keep yourself supplied with conversational material.

With each idea that you hear or express, be on the lookout for some related idea to furnish a suggestion for your next step. Do this while you are talking, during the pauses in your own conversation, and also while you are listening. At first that sort of thing may seem hard to do, but with practice you can learn to carry forward several intermittent lines of thought without confusion. Let's see how it might work out.

Suppose it occurs to you that an authentic Swedish accent might have been difficult for Americans to understand. That line of reasoning would suggest that the director sacrificed authenticity for understandability. But, being a diplomat, you reject this idea, for fear that it might be resented by your Swedish friend. So you look for another idea.

Then you remember that there are many first-rate Swedish actors in America, and you decide you have come upon pertinent conversational material. So you say, "With Ingrid Bergman, Edgar Bergen, Greta Garbo, Ole Olsen and all those other Swedish people out in Hollywood, it might have been good business to put some of them into the picture, and then let nature take its course."

Suppose, next, you suddenly have a vivid remembrance of the actor's voices in that film. You recall how their sentences were high-pitched and comparatively loud at the start, and tended to get lower in pitch and to diminish in volume toward the end. This characteristic, you recall, gave the dialogue a monotonous cadence. You comment on this observation, and while doing so you again remember that the dialogue was at least remarkably clear. So you tack on a remark to that effect, and thus eliminate the diplomatic pitfall of suggesting that the Swedish accent in itself is hard to understand. It might work out like this: "The sentences always seemed to start high and end low, in both volume and pitch. Because of this, I thought the dialogue was a little monotonous. But I'll say this for them—every word was clearly understandable."

At this point your Swedish friend is likely to take up the conversation himself. If he doesn't you will probably continue. You can do this in any one of a hundred different ways. You can analyze what you presume to be the director's reasons for using that particular accent. You can ask your friend to demonstrate what a Swedish accent should sound like. You can make comparisons with Irish or German accents, and remark that these are usually well handled in the movies. You can divert attention to some other phase of the film under discussion. You can look for additional illustrations, develop principles, inquire into your listener's experiences, and ask his opinions. You can make each new idea suggest some related idea indicating your next forward step. And those you like—you can use.

It cannot too strongly be emphasized that you will markedly improve the effectiveness of your conversation if you make it a rule to think of two or three different ideas for each idea you actually express. This little trick, reduced to a habit, will let you balance alternative ideas against each

other in your mind. Making these incessant mental comparisons will rapidly develop both your imagination and your judgment. It will increase your ability to engage the other fellow's keen interest. It will help you train yourself to reject ideas that might hurt your listener's feelings or that would turn the spotlight excessively on yourself and make you self-conscious.

By following these suggestions, you can expect to acquire surprising conversational skills. A few of these tricks came to my rescue one night fifteen years ago, when I was called on to make an unexpected speech. Because it is the sort of thing that can happen to you, I'll tell you about it.

Reading the newspaper after dinner, I learned that a well known public speaker was scheduled to talk that evening at a prominent club in Philadelphia. Having wanted to meet this man, I suggested to my wife that we go down.

We arrived twenty minutes late. The two men in charge of the program were friends of mine. They approached us in considerable agitation. Hurriedly they separated me from my wife, my coat, and my hat. Before I knew it, I was halfway down the aisle toward the platform.

"The speaker hasn't arrived," said one of them, "and the audience is getting restless. Get up on the platform and entertain them!"

"But what will I say?" I asked in consternation.

"You'll be making a speech here yourself next week," he suggested. "Tell them about your talk, and invite them to come back and hear it."

Obviously I wasn't getting much help.

I stepped up to the platform and explained that the speaker was late and that I had been asked to fill in.

"The only parallel case I know of," I said, "involves a performance that has always seemed surprising to me. A well-known judge, scheduled to address a parent-teachers

association, was delayed. The president of the association undertook to hold the interest of the audience. He talked," I went on with considerable emphasis, "for exactly one hour and twenty minutes.

"I certainly hope tonight's delay will be shorter. This association president filled out his time by telling the story of his life. He'd had an interesting life, too, because he had traveled all over the world. He started at the beginning and recited one event after another. Just when he was about to exhaust his subject, the scheduled speaker showed up—saving the substitute speaker from necessity to start over again. Now it is an interesting point that the president of that parent-teachers association, I have been told, was about sixty-five years old."

This was in such contrast to my own apparent age that the audience burst into laughter. Then I continued my remarks by telling the first story that popped into my mind. I reasoned from it, and then went on with another. This went on for a long time.

It is certainly not for me to say that the speech was good. Of that, I am the last person to judge. But never previously, and seldom since, have I felt so much at home with an audience. Many a talk, over which I have labored hard, has brought less satisfying results.

Presently the scheduled speaker arrived. At once I relinquished my position in favor of him. After he had delivered his address, a little elderly lady made her way to where I stood. "Young man," she said, "you told us about that speaker who talked for an hour and twenty minutes. All the time you talked, I kept watching that clock on the wall. You talked exactly that long yourself!"

I shall always remember her.

## Chapter 17

### *Getting Your Listener Interested*

**A**T A social gathering I attended many years ago, one man scarcely uttered a word all evening. Nevertheless he participated in the conversation. He did it by listening.

Something about his manner and appearance commended him to everyone present. He was retiring and shy, but good-looking. I recall thinking of him occasionally during the next few years, always favorably. One day he turned up working for a company that was employing my services as a management consultant. We collaborated on several projects. But in this association I got an entirely different picture of his personality.

When he opened up and talked, every other sentence disclosed confused and illogical thinking. Incessantly he showed that he felt disgruntled and abused. He griped about everything.

Often I thought of that earlier social meeting, and of the contrast it presented with his actual self. How smart he had been to keep silent!

Another man at that gathering seemed to be sullen and distrustful of his fellow men. He, too, said little or nothing, and I felt satisfied to have it that way. I did not feel about him—as I did about the other man—that we were all missing out on the scintillating wit of a raconteur, if he would only loosen up and talk.

This man also crossed my path in later years. But with what a difference! For he really had what the other man promised. He was a great conversationalist, and I have often regretted that it took so long to find that out.

Among those assembled guests there was a third man who still stands out in my mind. He did most of the talking. His conversation and enthusiasm proved so attractive that wherever he stood or sat he became the hub of a group of listeners. At dinner, his place became the head of the table. Although he entered that gathering as a stranger to most of us, he was the most popular person in the room. The reason is that people were happy in his presence. He was a source of pleasure.

This man also came into my life in ensuing years. Always he has shown the same ability to select interesting topics of conversation, to express himself fluently, and to present his words pleasingly. He knows when to hold his tongue and when to yield the spotlight to somebody else.

These three men illustrate some valuable points: (1) If you have little to offer that people will appreciate, it is wise to remain silent. (2) It is better to hold your tongue and risk the appearance of ignorance than to speak up and remove all doubt. (3) The person who says the right thing will almost invariably get more credit than the one who merely creates an impression that he is thinking it. (4) If you possess conversational charm, there is only one way of displaying it. You must talk.

This fourth point flies in the face of a popular notion to the contrary. Many people say that you build friendships faster by listening than by talking, and that the person who takes more than his own small share of the spotlight imposes on his friends. Yet you must have noted many times that this belief is fallacious.

Of course, you have often seen somebody get credit for exceptional knowledge only because he has had the good judgment to smother his mental poverty beneath a blanket of silent eloquence while registering tacit agreement with other people's points, and you can no doubt recall many another who hid his light under a bushel, possibly with some advantage, before letting it shine. But the person who gains the most credit is usually the one who says the right thing, at the right time, in the right way.

Isn't it true that the person who gets the lion's share of attention usually does more than the average amount of talking?

Undoubtedly the widespread negative belief arises at least partly from the fact that many of us are not adept in the art of conversing. We conceal our lack of adeptness behind a popular fallacy. But to whom shall we listen, if none of us is supposed to talk? And how are we to become articulate?

The truth of the matter is that saying the wrong thing, trying to wrest the floor from somebody else, and failure to hold the attention of a listener are the real hazards. When people express their warm admiration for the conversational clam, they are usually prompted to do so out of an appreciation of certain good qualities that they know he possesses.

Consider another example of contrasts:

Recently I attended a businessmen's luncheon. Seated across the table from me were two men; one was engaged in animated conversation; the other, outwardly polite, seemed to be smoldering in anger. Maybe I shouldn't have done it, but I listened in.

Seldom have I heard such a deluge of trivial ideas. The confused listener seemed to be saying to himself, "This fellow is trying so hard to be friendly and polite that he will wreck my disposition for the rest of the day. He never slows down, say nothing of stopping. And I can't pry a single idea

out of any remark he has made! If I let this go on, he'll sour my stomach and spoil my digestion. With important business coming up this afternoon, I can't afford that."

Of course, this estimate of his probable ruminations was speculation on my part. But I did notice that after this long-suffering man had stood for all he could accept, he decisively laid aside his knife and fork, folded his napkin, said "Excuse me!" and departed.

So I resumed an almost forgotten conversation with the man to my left. He was discussing an interpretation of recent labor legislation. He was no smooth talker. His ideas were poorly organized and confused. But he was talking about a subject in which I was vitally interested, for I was scheduled to make a speech on the same topic several days later. Here was an important executive furnishing me with needed information. I gleaned every scrap of information that I could.

All of us are occasionally forced to listen to somebody who talks uninterestingly. When you are the victim, if you listen at all, isn't it either to be polite or else because careful attention might enable you to pick up some worth-while ideas?

For such reasons, you listen *intentionally*. It takes effort. And you probably wish to heaven the other person would hurry up and come to his point.

But you instinctively stretch your neck to look at an accident or a brawl, and you invariably cock an ear to catch the follow-up of some arresting introductory remark. You give the kind of attention that will make you interrupt a good meal, if necessary, just to listen. That is *compelled* attention—and it is precisely the kind you want to get from your listeners. Ability to compel attention will give you conversational power. People will listen if they want to hear your remarks more than they want to do anything else.

It will pay you to find out just how to compel attention. An easy way to do it is to touch on one of the vital interests of the other person with your very first words.

At one of the performances of a local theater group, I noticed an old friend seated in the row ahead, across the aisle, possibly fifteen feet away. Not having seen him for several years, I was anxious to have a talk with him. To ensure this I somehow wanted to let him know I was there. The problem was to get him to turn his head and acknowledge my presence.

Now you don't go shouting over the heads of people in a theater. It wouldn't do to stand up and shout his name. So I cast about for a procedure that would attract less general attention.

My friend was a manufacturer of chewing gum and, I believe, one of the originators of possibly the newest and most significant development in the evolution of this product since its invention. At once I knew what I would do.

During a brief intermission, amidst the general hubbub, I called out, "Bubble gum."

Instantly my friend turned his head, and there followed the wave of recognition I desired.

Out of all that crowd, only one person had noticed my ejaculation. All ears except his were insensitive to it. But for him those two words were just as effective as his name in capturing his attention.

"When anybody utters those words," he told me afterward, "my hearing seems strangely acute."

Since you have some knowledge of the vital concerns of your friends, it is always easy to figure out an appropriate conversational approach.

With a stranger your problem may be more difficult. Lacking any knowledge of his vital concerns, you might have to search them out by dropping suggestions, one after an-

other, and noticing his reactions. Though he may at first greet your offerings with a disinterested grunt, there will be no doubt about it when you finally come upon the happy combination. His mind will stop whatever it was doing. He will turn all his attention to you.

Once having got his attention, your problem is to retain and strengthen it. This you can accomplish partly by your manner, partly by your voice, and partly by some accompanying dramatic act. You can do it by mentioning a startling fact, or by displaying some interesting exhibit. By all odds the best way to do it is to get him to look ahead to see what is coming next. In effect, promise him a reward for listening.

Arouse his curiosity. Feed it. See that he hangs on your words.

"I ran across an idea," said one of my friends, "that helped make a substantial reduction in my income tax. I think it will do the same for you."

Do you suppose I listened? You bet I did. For almost an hour!

Often curiosity can be heightened if it is introduced by the aid of a question. "Do you remember that problem you and I beat our brains out trying to solve one whole evening last year?" Such an opening will do the trick.

Whenever you can create an impression that you are about to satisfy a desire that the other person has, you are almost certain to capture his attention. But when you do this, be sure that you have something real to communicate. And you must usually begin to deliver the goods at once.

Another way of capturing and holding attention is to make your remarks unusual and pungent. Show originality.

Ponder the meaning of that word "originality." Look it up in the dictionary. Think about it. Explore its meaning. Then relate it to the problem of arousing people's interest.

Originality is imagination at work. It is the ability to be creative. It is the power to interpret underlying events and find new meanings. It creates new concepts, new modes of expression, and new ways of putting old ideas into fresh words.

You can become more sensitive to opportunities for original expression by observing what is said by others. Every time you encounter an original idea, make a note of it. Be careful how you use such material, or you will become an imitator. But make it a basis of comparison.

As you listen to a conversation, notice any expression that seems to you to be trite—and reword it silently, in your mind, as if you were helping the speaker to effective expression. Every time you succeed in doing this, you strengthen your own originality.

Look back over conversations in which you have participated as soon thereafter as possible, and figure out how your remarks could have been given an unusual twist. Get ready to do better next time.

Similarly, be critical of what you read in books, newspapers, and magazines. Pick out passages that were badly expressed, and see how you can improve them. Then select passages that were really well put, and study them. In the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin you will find that he used this technique to aid him in improving his literary style. You can do the same for your conversational style.

The world is filled with people who invariably say the most obvious thing, and say it in precisely the same way everybody else does. The other person's patience is quickly worn out if he can always predict what you are going to say.

Never say the obvious thing. Let it be dramatic and unexpected. Talk to a woman as you would to a man. Talk to a child as you would to an adult. Talk to a youth as though he were a big-time executive. Get the flavor of freshness into

every remark. Do this successfully, and people will seek your company.

Couch your thought in two or three forms of expression before you utter one of them. Contrive to state your thoughts so ingeniously that even people who know you well cannot guess what is coming. This is a remarkably useful way to fill those odd moments of delay while you are waiting for someone or for a streetcar. Play with ideas, and use the best ones next time you meet a friend. This will gain you a reputation as a conversationalist who has ideas worth hearing.

Haven't you often discovered that when reading a book, attending a lecture, or listening to somebody's conversation, your mind surreptitiously departs on excursions? Even though you have been following the words, you have not followed their meaning. This happens to everybody. The trouble is that what you read or hear suggests a mental side trip, which you explore. Then you feel guilty about your inattention.

You can assume that this also happens to those who listen to you. Nobody's attention can be held to the same thought without interruption for an extended length of time.

Since nothing can be done to prevent this, you might as well allow for it. Therefore plan to recapture attention as you go along. Put new emphasis into your voice every so often. Illustrate your ideas, pique your listener's curiosity.

Even when your material holds high interest value, your listener's attention will waver. You can learn to recognize the little telltale signs of a wandering attention. Notice your listener's manner and expression. As his interest rises toward a peak, you will observe that his eyes and his mind are in focus. His personality is somehow merged with your own. But suddenly, when you carry him beyond his endurance, the spell breaks. His mind slips out of focus. He perceptibly withdraws into his ivory tower.

Boredom usually sets in almost immediately after the peak of interest. The start of boredom is a critical point. Be alert for it. Renew interest. If that proves impossible, change the subject or close the discussion at once. Attempts to carry your listener beyond that point will be futile and foredoomed.

There is a highly elusive and hard to understand yet important technique that you can use in recapturing a listener's interest as often as may be required. Almost any exciting magazine article or conversation may serve to illustrate it. As you follow the substance of a well-developed presentation, careful analysis of your own reactions will show you that every here and there some statement hits your mind with a peculiarly forceful impact. These provocative statements are the key points of interest as far as you are concerned.

Notice that your reading or hearing them is accompanied by a pleasant surge of emotion. The pulse of your mind is quickened, and seems to skip a beat. Your attention is arrested. Your brain seems to halt while you absorb the idea presented. Your mind and emotions do a quick handspring, leaping in sudden exhilaration. For that instant every extraneous thought is expelled. The result is closely akin to the reaction induced by humor, as described in Chapter 21.

For the present we are interested solely in your ability to work these invitations to suddenly intensified mental activity into your conversation. To acquire this ability analyze examples in reading and conversation, of vigorous and stimulating thought. Whenever a peculiarly effective phrase or sentence strikes you with surprise and brings on a sudden onrush of thought, note how its effect was produced. Then see what you can do about developing such a mode of expression in your own conversation.

Often you can increase interest by the simple expedient of condensing your subject matter.

If you are old enough to remember the old-fashioned bicycle pump, you will recall how its metal cylinder heats up during repeated thrusts of the piston. This results from the fact that the air in the cylinder is compressed, producing an increase in temperature. Similarly, in conversation, a normal amount of interest compressed into a smaller number of words will produce livelier reactions in the minds of listeners.

Have you ever read a magazine article, then later seen a condensed version of it in the *Reader's Digest*? If so, you may have observed the principle of condensation in operation. By studying in detail the contrast between the two versions, you will notice how the editors, in preparing the condensation, have squeezed out all unnecessary words and phrases without reducing the thought content. Frequently the digest, though less comprehensive, succeeds in exciting more reader interest than did the original.

By studying the laconic style used by the digest magazine, you will make yourself condensation-conscious. Thus you will improve your ability to pack ideas into your conversation and to hold the interest of your listener. It's worth pains-taking effort to master that valuable trick.

## Chapter 18

### *Stimulating Him to Take Part*

FOR YEARS I have enjoyed the friendship of a man whose conversation is instructive because of the lore he has accumulated on a wide range of subjects. His conversation is also entertaining, because he tells stories well. His repertoire includes anecdotes of gay or pathetic events, historical narratives, and biographical profiles. He brings hidden meanings to light and his interpretations are discerning.

However, he has one serious fault. There is never an end to his torrent of words. He talks full speed ahead and leaves no room for an occasional offering by somebody else. He talks to you, but never lets you talk to him. He wears you out. If you interrupt him, he holds up a finger in warning and talks more loudly. He will guess what is in your mind and put it into words for you. Most of his friends can take him only in small doses.

He has made a fetish of this monologic technique. Once I listened in amazement when he interrupted himself to introduce a point of explanation, then interrupted that to dig up an illustration out of his remote past, which he in turn interrupted to present several irrelevant ideas suggested by a minor detail in one of his stories. Believe it or not, he carried this chain of interruptions through nine successive steps, then retraced his course to the original topic and went on as though he had done nothing unusual.

In any social gathering, he starts by studying one person after another, seeking his victim, for all the world like a beast of prey preparing to cut a wanted animal out of the herd. Unless the chosen one can offer an excuse for breaking away, he is stuck for the evening. Some people seem to like this man's conversations, and with them he gets along well. But there are many who don't like them.

Obviously, you must have something akin to his ability in order to maintain an extended one-sided conversation. But beware! Most of your friends will be grateful if you do no more than your share of the talking. After all, the other person has a right to his half of the conversation. Besides, the monologue is a complicated and difficult form of conversational construction, and usually it is uninteresting. You have to be superbly good to hold anyone's attention indefinitely, because practically everybody shows a keener interest in give-and-take conversation than in an interminable monologue.

Therefore you must be able to provoke the spark that causes the other person to join you in conversation. This will give you access to his knowledge, and his ideas will stimulate you. It will reduce your burden, for, by getting him to talk, you can save yourself the fatigue that a monologue imposes on whoever is brash enough to attempt it. So invite your conversational opposite to strut his stuff.

There are two fundamental things that you must do to accomplish this: (1) stimulate the other person into a desire to speak; and (2) avoid inviting him, however indirectly, to stop talking.

Let us create a situation.

Suppose you enter a train, in New York's Pennsylvania Station, headed for Philadelphia. You pick your seat-mate with an eye to conversational opportunity and prepare to sit down. Natural curiosity induces him to glance in your direc-

tion. So you greet him with a slight, impersonal smile. This permits you to notice his reaction, which you soften by saying, "Pardon me!"

Unless he was brought up in the jungle, he must at least grant you the right to sit with him. He grunts acquiescence.

Presently you consult your watch and say, "Twenty minutes late."

If he is bursting with a desire to talk, no more invitations will be needed. But he isn't, so you get another grunt. Since you've had two chances to size him up, you are now prepared to spring on him a direct invitation to conversation.

"Do you," you ask, "make this trip very often?"

Let us suppose the worst: he answers, "No."

You then continue, "I was just wondering about our chances of making up lost time."

No reply. No grunt. Evidently this bird is going to be tough. You decide to let him get slightly bored while you think things over. Then the train gets under way.

Ten minutes later, still with no clue, but looking past his profile at the moving landscape, you carry out a plan that has hatched in your mind. "You certainly get a look at the world through these windows," you say. "Sometimes I think of all the work it took to build these factories and the talent it takes to run them, and I wonder whether the younger generation is learning the techniques of production, advertising, selling, management, and finance needed to keep business moving ahead, and whether the income tax, the atomic bomb, or the communists will some day swallow up our hopes for the good life."

No comment. But you saw a slight wince over the words "income tax." Interest, yes; but no dice. Disagreeable association. Then two points click in your mind. That wistful twist of his lip over "younger generation" and the sudden

glint in his eye at the word "advertising" must mean something. So you ask, "If you had a younger brother asking for advice on the choice of his college course, as mine just did, and he was trying to choose between selling and production engineering, would you know how to give him an answer that would help him make a decision?"

He can hardly wait for you to finish. Within two minutes you discover that he has helped his son with the same problem. The chance to relive that treasured counseling was far too tempting for him. He could not resist your advances any longer.

That little procedure worked for me, just as I have described it. There followed a discussion that I enjoyed. Before I knew it, we were in Philadelphia. I didn't even have time to ask for my seat-mate's name.

These are the rules I followed: (1) Size up the other person, noting his initial reaction to you. (2) Dangle a miscellaneous selection of bait before his attention, watching to see which he prefers. (3) Ask a question touching on both his personal interest and your own—one that can be answered in a way that will give him pleasure.

Obviously, in talking to someone with whom you are well acquainted, your problem is easier. You know his hobbies, his likes and dislikes, his family, his special interests—and you can make a reference to one of them. In this case it makes little difference whether or not you start the conversation with a question. You can begin by telling him something he will be grateful for, or, if you want to get him to talk, you can drop lead ideas that will tempt him. But the easiest way to ensure his participation is to end each remark with a question.

Your selection of subject matter, however, calls for careful consideration. This is illustrated in the following account.

There is a certain young lady whose friendliness I have repeatedly striven to win. One evening I learned how to do it.

Patsy is eight years old. Some day she will be a cover girl. Almost always she smiles. She is intelligent and alert. She likes to talk, but not to me. Though all her life I have occupied what I considered a preferred position—as her uncle—my efforts have been fruitless.

One day I called at Patsy's home. When I drove up before her house, she was looking out of the window. As soon as she saw the car stopping outside, she ran upstairs and hid. During the afternoon I sat on a step beside her, put my arm around her shoulder, and said I was glad to see her. I received another rebuff. After several more compliments of this kind, she broke from my grasp and ran upstairs, to escape. Twice in one day! I told myself, *I had better learn how to captivate Patsy.*

Now I should like to interject a remark: Anybody who considers himself an authority on getting along with people treads dangerous ground. We all encounter failures. The sooner we find that out the better. It is the first step toward wisdom.

So I did what I have repeatedly recommended in the foregoing pages. I analyzed the problem. When Patsy came downstairs, I had the answer.

Somewhat abruptly, a little later on, I turned to her and asked, "Do you like your teacher?"

Hesitantly she said, "Yes."

Then I picked up a book of comics. "Have you read this?" I asked.

"Yes."

"What is it about?"

"It's about ugly animals and ugly people. You should look at them. They make you feel scary." Patsy went on with

more words than she had ever said to me in her entire life. The formula worked.

What had been wrong? This: In every previous conversation with Patsy, I had succeeded only in increasing her shyness by talking about Patsy herself. I had made her self-conscious. By diverting her attention to other ranges of interest, I corrected the trouble at once.

Now, Patsy is only a little girl. But older people are shy too, and they react in much the same way.

So if you want to get the other person to talk, steer away from topics that invite his self-consciousness. Do not swallow the popular fallacy that everybody always and interminably likes to talk about himself.

I didn't learn this from Patsy, but I did learn from her something equally valuable, namely, that I had forgotten to use what I already knew. All of us, from time to time, fall into this error. What we know is worthless unless we use it.

Making the other person self-conscious will interfere with his conversational ability, possibly causing him to stop talking. Do not bring up subjects he would prefer not to talk about. Do not arouse disagreeable memories, rub him the wrong way, interrupt him, contradict him, ask questions that indicate a prying mind, or tempt him inadvisedly to discuss his personal affairs.

Say what he wants to hear, and ask questions he will enjoy answering. This rule is so important that as long as you satisfy it you can violate every other rule. You can even interrupt and contradict the other person if you thereby enliven and enrich the conversation. You can even anticipate his remarks and finish them for him. You can lift the discussion right out of his hands. You can switch to another subject. You can pry into his secrecy and invade his privacy, hammer at his pet prejudices and vanities, criticize him, educate him,

correct his mistakes, even arouse his resentment—provided that he will, a few moments later, be glad you did.

All these rules have been brought together because each harbors an invitation to trouble. Any one of them, incautiously applied, may damage your position in the other person's esteem. Among my most intelligent and respected friends there are some who repeatedly apply them incautiously. And perhaps you do too.

You can't always avoid situations that invite resentment. But you can school yourself to observe the indications of negative reaction that appear in your listener's face and manner, and occasionally even in his conversation. So make it a point to search for signs of resentment. Each such sign indicates that you have failed to anticipate his reaction correctly. Assiduous attention to these details will enable you to satisfy the definition of a gentleman which says that he never, even inadvertently, gives offense.

You can avoid trouble by encouraging the other person to strut his stuff rather than doing the strutting yourself. Act as though his knowledge of a subject goes deeper than your own. When in doubt about the wisdom of providing information, seek it instead.

Get a line on the other person's achievements, and induce him to describe them. He'll enjoy that far more than listening while you undertake to parade yours.

People enjoy expressing their original ideas. They like to give their views on controversial topics and describe the fruits of their thoughts and experiences. We all do, don't we?

Yet, as a matter of sober fact, very few of us ever get a chance, from one week's end to the next, really to satisfy our vanity in that manner. Consequently almost anybody will warm up to the person who invites him to satisfy this longing.

Does this always mean self-denial? Hardly. If you must submerge all your desires in favor of those of your friend,

you may have to pretend an interest in his affairs that you do not feel, which is mighty unconvincing. As a temporary expedient calculated to stimulate the other person's participation, such self-denial will work, but as soon as possible steer the conversation toward subjects that are just as interesting to you as to him. If, however, it is necessary for you to keep strictly to the role of listener, let whatever ejaculations you make—whether of acquiescence or pleasure or surprise—be sincere, because if they are not, he will soon be aware of that.

As I think, at random, of four friends, I realize that in each case we have a common area of interests. With the first one I always talk business; with the second, philosophy and religion; with the third, abstract ideas mixed with reminiscences; with the fourth, recreational pursuits. With each of these friends, past associations and similarity of interests shape the course of discussions. With one of them, the conversation has meat and substance; with another, it has humor and is anecdotal; with another, it consists of small talk.

Many people seem to believe that conversation must have magnitude and importance. Possibly some of us give this impression intentionally, to mask our inability to cope with light topics. But the fact remains that small talk aimed at temporary amusement is the most popular. It is also the easiest to handle.

People like to hear things that do not compel them to think. They are almost universally interested in trivialities. When you understand the knack of making small conversation, you can get attention almost anywhere. And you don't need to soak up the contents of an encyclopedia by way of preparation.

But there will always be some people who want serious fare and who are irked by trivialities. It is they who appreciate conversation that has breadth and depth, who under-

stand your ideas, and who become pleasurabley aware of excellence in your presentation.

Instead of boring a small-talk person with discussions requiring mental acuity, and instead of inflicting trivia on those who consider it fun to strain their mental resources, learn to suit your conversational powers to the individuals. Develop adaptability.

As lead ideas come to your mind, remember that no two people will look at them in precisely the same way.

You can mention money to one person and he will think of his debts. To another money will suggest his pet ambition, the stock market, a deal he is working on, the house he is struggling to purchase, or the financial program he is setting up for his old age. You can mention food to one person and he will think of a good meal. To another food will suggest his closely restricted diet, his excess or insufficient weight, his greatest pleasure in life, or perhaps what he should feed his goldfish or chickens. You can mention health to one person and he will think how lucky he is. To another health will suggest the photograph of his daughter in an ebullient mood, the fact that his doctor expects him to live only six months, his lack of energy for meeting his daily tasks, or perhaps the size of his own biceps. If you mention any of these words before a group of people, you could conceivably get all these reactions and more besides. Each person will relate your suggestion to what is most prominently related to that suggestion in his mind. In any conversation, therefore, there will be as many reactions as there are participants.

Never leave the whole conversational job to the other person without even a grunt now and then to show that you are still awake. You take delight, don't you, in talking to someone who hangs on to your words in childlike wonder? Don't you quickly lose interest in a listener who assumes a bored attitude of sophistication, and who gives the impres-

sion that he has heard it all before? Put these questions to yourself, and be guided by your answers.

A display of interest in the other person will often stimulate him to outdo himself. Each time you boost his emotional vigor, you tend to raise yourself in his esteem, and he responds by achieving heights of eloquence. So pay him the compliment of listening intently instead of in passive silence. And check up on the success of your efforts by noticing whether they really do stimulate him.

Ask an occasional intelligent question. Seek additional information. This gives evidence of more than just an obvious appeal to the speaker's pride. As a result he will be eager to please you. And he may respond with colorful details that add to the instructive nature of his discourse. Help him parade his knowledge to best advantage.

A popular misconception holds that getting along with people consists largely in listening to the other person's point of view and then expressing prompt and complete agreement. There is nothing very dramatic about that sort of approach, unless it is used as a contrast. It is a fact that agreement from a good listener implies a compliment. But it is also a fact that people who stand out favorably in your mind are usually among those who do their full share of the talking.

Get into sympathy with the point of view of your listener, of course. Use ingenuity to avoid crossing verbal swords, and contrive a change of subject when occasion demands. But if you must disagree, don't hesitate to do it.

There are two purposes in disagreement: (1) to correct somebody else's erroneous thinking and (2) to give the other person a chance to discover and point out what is wrong with your thinking. In the latter case, only a moderate amount of diplomacy is required for safe handling. But in the former, considerable care is needed. The trick is to disagree without giving offense, at the same time leading the other person to

consider that you have done him a favor. Otherwise you give him an obvious invitation to unfriendliness.

The next time one of your friends makes a remark with which you find it necessary to disagree, consider using this procedure:

1. Instead of expressing your contrary opinion, ask why he feels as he does. Put a little surprise into your voice, and he will doubtless try harder to produce all the good reasons he can. As you listen to them, separate those that you can accept from those that you cannot accept.

2. Express your agreement on each acceptable point, possibly indicating that at least a part of it springs from the enlightenment he has provided. This preserves an atmosphere of friendliness.

3. Mention one of the points on which you cannot agree. Without saying that he is wrong, explain your reasons for doubting the validity of that point. Say that possibly you are wrong in your thinking, and ask him to clarify his argument. Lay the burden on him to demonstrate how and why you are wrong, rather than attempt to prove that you are right. Strive to increase the area of agreement, so that the disparity between your point of view and his will gradually diminish.

4. Comment on the points on which you have changed your mind because of his arguments. Let him enjoy whatever sense of victory he desires. Then call his attention to the points that you still cannot accept. Give him your reasons and ask him whether he thinks you are wrong.

By this time he will doubtless be so eager to satisfy you in each particular that it will be far easier for him to give in a little here and there than if you had started in by opposing his views. The chances are that one of you will convince the other, and with little or no friction.

In case you don't like this procedure, ask yourself this question: Will you win a friend more easily (1) by swallowing your pride and expressing an agreement with him that you do not feel, or (2) by giving him the pleasure of finding out that you changed your mind because of the cogency of his arguments?

## Chapter 19

### *Improving Your Manner of Talking*

DURING my college days I spent many hours reading the dictionary. As a result I collected quite an assortment of previously unfamiliar words. Persistently I strove to weave them into my conversation. People would say, "Boy, what big words you use!" Each time this happened, I felt that my study was paying off.

At a social gathering one evening a friend suggested, "Let's see how many words you can think of that nobody in the room has ever heard of. We'll look each word up in the dictionary, to check up on you. While we do this, you can be thinking of the next word."

Because of the egotism of youth, I suppose, the idea appealed to my desire for a feeling of importance, so I paraded samples of my newly acquired knowledge. At the end of half an hour I was given a lesson I shall never forget.

"Now that you've shown your unusual vocabulary," the same friend said, "there is one question I'd like to ask. What good are these words?"

"What good are they!" I exclaimed. "They express meanings!"

"Certainly they do," said my friend. "But who's going to be interested enough in your use of them to look them all up?"

It was the last time I ever attempted such a demonstration, and I sincerely hope that it was the last time I ever showed off by using unfamiliar words.

The main unit of speech is the word. In selecting the right word for any occasion, there are just two basic considerations: (1) it must express your meaning exactly, and (2) it must be familiar enough to your listeners so that they can understand it without having to puzzle over it. Satisfying these two points does not require a vocabulary of tremendous size.

A good method of enlarging your working vocabulary is to get your new words from conversations, newspapers, magazines, the movies, the radio, and the television. This will virtually guarantee their social acceptability.

Keep alert for words that are new to you, for old words used in a new or unfamiliar meaning, and for words that seem to you to have been mispronounced. Jot them down or lodge them in your mind, and at your earliest opportunity look them up. Add them to your vocabulary, in their correct meaning and pronunciation, by the simple expedient of using them several times.

Speeches and other patter coming over the air waves are not always paragons of eloquence, of course, but they are above the average level of American conversation. When you listen to radio programs and hear a word that seems to be incorrectly pronounced, don't be too quick to decide that the speaker is wrong. Check that word in the dictionary. This will enable you to catch and correct a persistent but unsuspected error on your part.

The term that describes the choice of words is "diction." The way to improve your diction is to develop ability in making selections. But an effort to do this while you are talking will produce hesitation and stumbling, jerkiness and fum-

bling, repetition and correction. It will diminish your smoothness.

Usually the person who hesitates and stumbles is consciously searching for words. Perhaps he searches for a word that does not instantly come to mind. Mentally he rejects one word in favor of another. Occasionally after using a word he changes it. Sometimes he repeats a word because it didn't sound right to him, although it may have sounded right to his listener. That is the method—if any—that most people use in improving their diction. But it is difficult and slow.

You are accustomed to choosing your words spontaneously. They come by habit, and you take them rather uncritically. Therefore a sudden resolve to make better selections upsets your natural processes of thought—the processes you have been practicing all your life.

You are better off to stick to the habitual method. If you want real smoothness, take each word as it comes. Get the right word if you can, but do it as unconsciously as possible. Right or wrong, once you have uttered a word, let it stand. Never make a correction unless you must.

You can improve your diction by enlarging your vocabulary, by studying words, by trying various phrases over in your mind during odd moments, by noticing the diction of other people, by composing sentences on paper, and in other similar ways. You can do it by packing foresight into your conversational pauses. But do your improving while you are not actually talking—unless you are willing to sacrifice smoothness.

The term that describes smoothness in speech is “fluency.” The way to improve your fluency is to develop ability in making your conversation flow along pleasingly without unintentional interruptions. Fluency is just as important as diction, and perhaps it is harder to improve. Very few

people are outstanding in either fluency or diction, but to make your conversation attractive you must be outstanding in both.

Just as the effort to improve your diction will tend to diminish your fluency, so will the effort to improve your fluency tend to diminish the quality of your diction. Fluency requires that you do not hesitate and stumble over your words. Good diction requires that you choose your words with care. At first glance it appears that good diction and fluency contradict each other. But except during the effort to improve them, they don't. Each helps the other—after you have learned the trick of making them. The trick is to give equal attention to both.

You can help develop this trick into a habit if you practice fluency and good diction at the same time. Give yourself some exercises in using language that is clear, accurate, and varied. You will ultimately be able to choose the right words habitually without conscious thought. You will be able to work them into your conversation without hesitation and stumbling. Your conversation will then be characterized by both fluency and apt diction.

Merely choosing the right words and achieving smoothness, however, are not enough. You must also enunciate clearly. Do not run your words together. Improve the distinctness of each syllable you utter by exaggerating the physical articulation made by the organs of speech. Exaggerate the use of your lips, your teeth, the muscles in and around your mouth, your tongue, and your throat.

Another unit of speech construction is the phrase. Each phrase consists of a group of two or more words. Add to your stock of telling phrases by noticing unusual ones in your everyday reading, in conversation, in motion pictures, and in radio programs. You can acquire new groups of words from almost any source—by being guided through a factory for the

first time, by turning your radio dial to the broadcast of a game, by attending a lecture on art, by taking part in amateur theatricals, or by listening closely to someone who is giving points on his occupation or hobby, whether that is the piloting of an airplane, pearl fishing, or the breeding of dogs.

Pauses, too, may be considered a unit of speech construction. All good conversation should be interspersed with them, for they add strength to sentences. Pauses should be longer than most people imagine. They serve a practical purpose, since they give the speaker frequent chances to adjust his thinking.

Use each pause to look ahead, to take a bearing on your next phrase, to shape it up in a preliminary way, to choose its key words, and to decide what relatively new or unfamiliar word to employ. Your pauses provide an effective setting for your conversation. They give your listener a brief time to think, to adjust his ideas, to absorb your full meaning, and to catch up with and digest what you have said. Hence your pauses serve one purpose for you the speaker, and another for your listener. They give you the opportunity to prepare well-rounded phrases, thus improving your fluency and making your meanings easier to grasp.

Just as the syllables in words should be given the proper primary and secondary (or strong and weak) accents, so each phrase should rise to a climax on one or more words.

Here is a bit of conversation in which all this is illustrated:

"Every time you *drive* a car (pause) you take your *life* in your hands. (Pause.) So you need a *philosophy* of driving (pause) that *emphasizes* this *fact*. (Pause.) Such a philosophy should embody *two points*. (Pause.) The *first* of these (pause) is that no matter *what* happens (pause) you must not *hit anything*. (Pause.) You must not even risk the *chance* (pause) of hitting anything. (Pause.) This means

that you must *always* (pause) be *prepared* (pause) to *stop*. (Pause.) You must avoid excessive *speed* (pause) because it could *result* in an *accident*. (Pause.) The *other* point is that you must *never* *permit* anything else to *hit* you. (Pause.) In the light of *today's driving conditions* (pause) you must assume that *every other driver* (pause) is a *moron* and a *fool*. (Pause.) You must *expect* him to *hit* you if he *possibly can*. (Pause.) It is your job to prevent him from *doing* it. (Pause.) That may seem *hard to accomplish*. (Pause.) But it is the *only way to be safe!*"

Now read aloud from this book in a room by yourself. Make sure that you pronounce each word exactly as it is shown, including each letter except the letters intended to be silent, as the "g" in "resign." Pick out the places to pause, and use them for effectiveness as well as for regaining your breath. Then, when you come upon some brief passage that seems to offer unusual opportunity for expressiveness, say it over several times.

Then have a conversational session all by yourself. Talk to yourself, on any subject that comes to mind, as you sit before a mirror. Watch the image of your mouth, your tongue, and your lips. Before sounds that call for the closing of your lips, open your mouth wider than you consider necessary. Shape each sound carefully with your lips. See how this procedure increases distinctness of enunciation. Give attention to the length of your phrases. Make each pause long enough to be expressive. Then turn on your radio for a few minutes, tune in the best speaker you can find, and compare his technique with yours. Especially, compare the frequency and length of his pauses with yours. Make whatever improvements are indicated, as you practice again.

Still another unit of speech is the sentence. Much conversation is composed of sentences having deplorable construction. It is not necessary here to go into that in detail,

since there are many excellent books and courses in grammar and rhetoric. Besides, that is a special study in itself, and if you are convinced you need it, you will take it up by joining a class or by systematic reading.

Many years ago I purchased a phonograph recorder for use in public speaking classes. Hundreds of speeches made by students were recorded. Probably all of them were made by people with better than average intelligence. Most of the people were well educated. A considerable number of them had college degrees; some had doctorates. Yet not a single one of those talks turned out to be grammatically perfect.

The recordings were turned over to a stenographer, who transcribed them on the typewriter. Even those speeches that had sounded excellent when they were delivered showed glaring defects when read. Grammatically, many of them were atrocious.

Often the students who made the recordings were asked to submit written-out speeches in advance of delivery. Always, when a comparison was made, the written speech was grammatically far superior to the spoken one. This showed the contrast between what they *could* do and what they ordinarily *do*.

Simply by talking more nearly the way you write you can gain much improvement in the grammatical construction of your sentences. And the time to gain it is during your pauses, when you are looking ahead to shape your forms of expression.

Speech deficiencies are not confined to classes in public speaking. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, which many regard as the finest speech of all time, contains a grammatical error. So, probably, does practically every other famous speech ever delivered. But do not attempt to check this by reading famous speeches, because they are usually edited before publication.

An easy way to improve your sentence structure while you are talking is to adopt the expedient of keeping each sentence short. Once I heard an address by the head of an institution of religious learning. He was a bearded gentleman of the old school. He was also an honest man, as this story will show.

Throughout the talk, his diction was crisp and precise, and throughout most of it his sentence structure was excellent. But he became involved in one of those long and ramified sentences during which he and all of us got lost. Suddenly he interrupted himself to say, "My goodness, I forget how I started this sentence!"

If you keep your sentences short, that will not happen to you.

The most important parts of each sentence are its subject and its predicate—that is, the start and the conclusion. The rest of the sentence consists of qualifications of one or the other. Keep these elements simple, and they will be easier to control. They will also be easier to understand. You can, possibly, help yourself—as I have—by visualizing punctuation as you speak. Pick out each sentence opening, each comma, each period, and see them all in your mind. In this way you can gradually achieve grammatical correctness in your conversation.

In actual speech you utter sounds, and those sounds are your voice. Fundamentally your voice is the tool for giving sound to your words. The muscles in and around your organs of speech are tools for enunciating words properly. Each word should be clear and distinct, and it can readily be made so by careful attention to just a few details.

When you inhale air, your lungs expand. Get this air well down in the direction of your stomach, next to your diaphragm. Try it. Then exhale the air from the region

of your stomach, as slowly as possible, producing just barely enough force to set your vocal cords in vibration. Utter a few phrases or sentences, pausing long enough between them to recapture your breath. The breathing must be done noiselessly.

Practice correct breathing by reading a poem aloud—for instance, this one by Thomas Hood, in which the groupings are all of the same length:

I remember, I remember  
The house where I was born,  
The little window where the sun  
Came creeping in at morn;  
He never came a wink too soon,  
Nor brought too long a day,  
But now, I often wish the night  
Had borne my breath away!

Next, experiment with your vocal cords. Set them into vibration by driving air from your lungs. Thus you produce vocal sound, or voice. When you bring your vocal cords together—by closing the space between them, known as the glottis—you raise the pitch of your voice. When you spread them apart—by opening the glottis—you lower the pitch.

Now fortify yourself with a volume of air. Expel it slowly, uttering a low groan. Pull in your chin against your neck and relax your vocal cords, getting the pitch as low as you can. See how little air you can expel in the process. Find the lowest tone you are capable of developing that is practicable for ordinary use, and build your new and improved voice on that as a basis.

After practicing this groan until your voice is low-pitched, relaxed, and economical of air, you are ready for the next step.

Start talking. Use one continuous tone for each phrase. Intersperse your phrases with pauses, but do not stop uttering sound during any individual phrase. Control the formation of your words by shaping sounds carefully with your lips, your tongue, and the muscles of your throat, periodically retarding the flow of air or closing it off entirely as called for by the process of manufacturing syllables. Try to maintain constant and unvarying air pressure throughout each phrase, to produce an expressionless monotone.

Now you are ready to put variety into your voice. There are three fundamental ways to do it: (1) You can vary your pitch, or intonation, by letting your voice ramble up and down the scale, through a fairly wide range, and changing its timbre, or tone color. (2) You can vary your tempo, by speeding up a series of relatively unimportant words, and then slowing down for occasional emphasis. (3) You can vary your volume, by making either more or less noise, as demanded by what you are saying.

Effective use of these three ways of achieving variety will guarantee against monotony in your speech. They present the opportunity for contrast. Next to the attractiveness of your ideas, such contrast is perhaps the most important tool for getting interest.

Practice can make you proficient in the use of variety. Much can be learned with the aid of a piano, especially regarding pitch. Choose a sentence—any sentence calling for expressive speech. "Boy, I'm glad I'm an American!" will do. Say it over in several ways. Then go to your piano and find the notes you have used to express each sound. See how far up and down the scale they range. See also how many of your syllables were off key, for the habit of using unmusical tones will give your voice a quality that is hard on people's nerves. It is impossible to deal in these pages with all the aspects of speech cultivation by the help

of the piano, since it would be necessary to demonstrate with a piano.

There is also a parallel between the cadence, or flow, of language and the flow of notes in music. Speech is most effective when it is expressed in a reasonably rhythmic flow that in general follows the spacing of notes in music, or rhythm and meter in poetry.

The relationship between poetry and music is instantly seen from the ease with which poetry is set to music. Within limits, the same applies to prose. The primary difference between prose and poetry, in this sense, is that in prose the meter constantly varies. That is why it is useless to formulate rules for controlling the rhythm and meter of ordinary speech.

To cultivate your speech, practice reading poetry aloud. Use different kinds of verse for this purpose, until you have practiced every type of rhythm likely to arise in ordinary speech. By doing this, you will gain the ability to apply essential principles. This will give you effective control of the rhythm of everyday conversation.

But all these rules, you may be thinking, appear complicated and difficult to remember and apply. As a matter of fact, none of them will be worth very much to you until their application has become habit. Fortunately, practice will produce that result. After a reasonable amount of practice, to paraphrase William James, you can turn each of these rules over to the effortless custody of habit.

Here are a few rules, however, that are easier to apply: Get close enough to your listener so that he can see your face. About a quarter of the time, he will be hard of hearing, although he may not know it himself. Many of us partly depend, consciously or otherwise, on reading the speaker's lips. Therefore do not obstruct the other person's vision by concealing the lower half of your face. Do not make

your lip motions unintelligible by talking with a cigarette or pipe in your mouth. And if your listener shows any sign of making an effort to hear, increase your volume. All these things are important, and all are frequently ignored.

There is yet another rule that is uncomplicated and easy to apply: Be enthusiastic. Your own interest in a subject is aroused automatically as soon as you become enthusiastic about it. And your enthusiasm develops most rapidly when you are listening to someone who has much of the same ebullience that you have.

The person who gets the most attention is often the one who gets excited over his subject. Excitement is contagious and readily transferred to others, and it lends itself to effectiveness of expression. It puts richness into your voice, animates your face, and colors your whole personality. It supplies you with emotional energy and helps your ideas to flow along.

Most of us talk as though we don't consider our subject matter any too interesting. Consequently we draw on only a small part of our resources. So key up your interest. Take your subject seriously, and see to it that you yourself have a full realization of its value. Your subject should excite you. But keep your excitement under control. Do not permit it to indicate a determination to force your opinions on people and bend them to your will.

If you do not naturally manifest enthusiasm, try this: Drive alone through open country in your car. Select some topic about which you feel strongly, and then talk—to the birds, the bees, the trees, and the flowers. Sounds foolish, perhaps, but if you really let yourself go, you will get into the spirit of the thing, and your stolidity will vanish. In this way you can acquire a feeling for expressing enthusiasm in conversations.

In order to improve your manner of talking, you will have to criticize yourself as you go along. Don't make the mistake of thinking incessantly in terms of the other person's opinion. Worry about *your* opinion, not his. As long as you choose your topics wisely and handle them well, it is reasonable to assume that your listener will be thinking of your subject matter instead of flaws in its presentation. And as long as you seem to be interested in him rather than in yourself, your conversation will be judged worthy from his point of view too. An easy way to create the proper psychological mood is to talk with as much interest in your listener as you would display if you were listening to him instead.

Even if there are many weak spots in your manner of talking, you can still be a smooth and polished conversationalist provided you have just one or two outstanding attention-getting virtues. Actually, too much self-assurance will sometimes put you at a disadvantage by giving your listener a sense of inferiority, whereas hesitancy in your speech may tend to enlist his unconscious aid. So be content with doing the best you can. Remember that most of us suffer from all kinds of conversational faults. But all of them can be overcome by practice.

Seek every chance to increase your skill. Learn from others by direct observation. Practice using abilities you would like to acquire, even though you do it crudely at first, and don't limit yourself to only occasional exercise of them. Regard every business or personal conversation, even your telephone calls, as additional means of self-improvement. And if you want to be thorough about it, take special training!

We all have varying levels of conversational ability. At times when we are at our best, we enjoy an exhilarating sense of confidence and mental keenness, a dexterity in the

use of words, and a flow of language that shows what we *can* do under the right circumstances. At other, more frequent, times, our experience is less encouraging. Yet those few times when we attain lofty heights in expression show what is possible. With persistent effort, excellence in speech will become a normal and routine performance for you.

## Chapter 20

### *Knowing When Not to Talk*

GLENN SCHOFIELD had a good job. Because he knew how to manage people and gave devoted service to his firm, he was able to hang up unusual production and profit records. Those who produce company profits are popular with management, but sometimes they arouse the envy of rivals.

Glenn's immediate superior begrudged him his success and hankered to get rid of him. He decided to maneuver Glenn out of his job and put in an old-time friend by the name of Emmet Hobbs who called himself a "production expert."

"I'll arrange," Glenn's boss told Hobbs, "for you to spend a day with Glenn Schofield. I'll ask him to give you a minute description of the particulars of his work. I'll inform him that he can get a lot of practical ideas from you. While you are with him, size him up. Study his methods and see how they can be improved. Then report to me. If you can impress our executives, then I think I can get them to offer you the job."

For a whole day Glenn and Hobbs were together. Glenn analyzed his methods in the shop for Hobbs, the plant equipment and layout, the administrative procedures, and the department's policies. He described important problems and told how they were being solved. Hobbs made mental

notes on diametrically different methods that could be used to undermine Glenn's.

Glenn wondered what was going on, for Hobbs wore a superior air. Hobbs was palpably the "production expert"—out to find defects.

Glenn's boss, Glenn, and Emmet Hobbs had lunch together. Glenn said little, but he did a lot of listening. Before the meal was over, the situation was clear to him.

During the afternoon Hobbs perversely picked flaws in everything Glenn had told him. He deliberately set out to destroy Glenn's confidence in himself. He badgered Glenn with criticism in order to get at Glenn's defense of his methods—a knowledge of which would come in handy later when he talked to management. And he tried to browbeat Glenn with his authority as a production expert.

As Glenn defended himself, Hobbs listened with a semblance of profound patience. Then he about-faced and delivered a paternalistic lecture.

"I am not impressed with your arguments," he said. "You have given me a long list of justifications for your methods, but they can't be justified. You are rationalizing. Do you know what is meant by 'rationalizing'?"

Glenn didn't answer, and Hobbs went on.

"I'll tell you a story," he said. "Suppose you were to buy a pair of shoes. Let's say you have decided to spend eight dollars. You have talked it over with your wife and agreed that that is what you can afford. You tell the clerk what you have in mind, and he shows you several pairs. One of them suits you.

"The clerk is a good salesman though, and he shows you a pair at eleven dollars and tells you that they have just been reduced from a higher price and are a bargain. He stands them beside the eight-dollar pair, which makes the latter look cheap by comparison. He tells you that the eleven-

dollar pair will outwear the cheaper ones and be more comfortable, and he gets you to try them on. So you yield to temptation and buy them. You have spent an extra three dollars, and you feel guilty about it.

"Down in your heart you know that you have been tricked by smooth salesmanship, but you try to prove to yourself that you did the right thing. You tell yourself that the higher-priced shoes are worth more than three dollars extra, that they are more appropriate for a man in your position, and that they are a better buy. You do this partly to kid yourself and partly because you know that you will need a battery of supporting arguments to offer your wife when you get home.

"What you are doing is to make your action seem rational. You are trying to justify your decision by making up reasons that sustain it. Psychologists call that process 'rationalizing.'

"I think that you have been rationalizing in explaining your methods. Actually, the reason you handle them the way you do is partly laziness and partly not understanding how the job should be done. Think it over! I'm sure you will agree with me."

Glenn's boss and Emmet Hobbs thought that they had concealed their ulterior motives. But no one can conceal such motives while he talks to the victim of his machinations unless indeed the victim is easily duped. Glenn wasn't, and he read the motives as easily as though they had been proclaimed in neon lights.

If Glenn's boss and Hobbs had gone about their chicanery without talking to their victim, their iniquities might not have been discovered. But they didn't know when not to talk.

Glenn, on the other hand, did know when not to talk. He sat there during the lunch and listened silently. And

he listened silently during the paternalistic lecture afterward. Glenn himself, it so happened, was a student of psychology. He, too, could have presented the illustration involving the purchase of shoes, for he had come across it in his reading years before. Glenn listened silently—partly out of politeness, but chiefly because he desired to conceal the fact that he was cognizant of the intrigue.

What Glenn had seen was the outward expression of a conspiracy. The two other men had sought to hide their chicanery, but they could not hide all their maneuverings. That there was a concealed motive was evident from the disparity between their words and the motives they professed. That the concealed motive was sinister to Glenn's welfare was evident, for why else would they hide it? Besides, both men were self-conscious. Only a concealed motive could explain their artificial manner.

It is worth noting that the word "artificial" is, after all, only the adjective form of the noun "artifice." That is important because "artifice" is defined as an act that "screens its real purpose while apparently effecting something else." It is synonymous with "cunning, finesse, maneuver, trick, ruse, stratagem, craft, device, deceit." When such evidence is in the air, its victim can use ordinary logic to detect and define what is behind it.

There are many reasons why Glenn might have turned the issue into an immediate conflict. There were two reasons why he didn't: (1) he wanted to avoid going off half-cocked, and (2) he wanted time to build an iron-clad case.

When you suspect skullduggery, or when you are involved in a disagreeable situation that escapes understanding at the moment, you will often be wise to use your ears instead of your tongue. Keep listening until you assemble enough details so that logic will enable you to gain full comprehension. That will usually give you all the informa-

tion you need to settle your problem when the right time comes. It did for Glenn.

The outcome was that Glenn Schofield—the man who knew when not to talk—kept his job, while his immediate superior, Hobbs's sponsor, lost his. These two had both talked themselves into a predicament.

There are other lessons in the foregoing story, for Emmet Hobbs made mistakes that often creep into the conversations of well-meaning people who have nothing to hide. He talked down to his listener. He told a detailed story already known to his listener. He attempted to educate a person whose knowledge already equaled his own. And he said many things that gave offense.

It is imprudent to express what may create a bad impression or cause damage; what will not arouse your listener's interest; what will irritate him, give you the appearance of patronizing him, or offend his ego; what will invite futile argument; what he cannot understand or will not accept; what will mark you as irresponsible; or what will arouse or express destructive emotion. It is also imprudent to talk when your desire is only to make a show of your knowledge; when somebody else has and deserves the floor; when emotions are overly distraught; when you are not sure of your facts; when you choose a time that your listener would rather use for some other purpose; when you cannot get proper attention; when, having something worth while to say, you talk your topic to death; or when, and this is probably the worst of all, you should be listening and not talking.

The ability to keep silent at the proper time is often more valuable than the ability to express your thoughts effectively. For every person who does not talk when he should, there are a hundred persons who talk when they shouldn't. Injudicious talk progressively destroys the ability

to reach others through conversation. No matter how precious some gem of thought may be, no one will pay attention to its expression if the speaker has worn out his welcome.

Your remarks are likely to classify you as tactless or considerate, foolish or wise. When you are not sure how you are being classified, remember that silence will seldom alter another's judgment of you for the worse.

It is a good rule to refrain from making any remark that a listener could wish had not been said. Unless your reason for making it is so cogent as to justify whatever damage it might cause—and such a reason practically never exists—you had better not say it.

If you express whatever comes into your mind, without discretion, many of your remarks will backfire in one way or another. Generally, an idea that would give offense can be reworded and made acceptable. Frequently it can be omitted with no loss whatever.

Go over some of your recent conversations. Judge whether any of your remarks would better have been left unsaid. Give yourself a black mark in each such case. Wince over it, suffer because of it, take your spanking! This is important. Often words uttered thoughtlessly do great harm. Therefore, get the habit of considering their effect in advance. Foresee the pitfalls, and avoid them!

It is safe to relax your precaution only when all your impulses have been disciplined and conditioned for complete reliability. There are controlling principles to get you on a track that will lead you in the direction of such competence. Most of those principles are suggested by the six-point analysis procedure previously discussed: "Who, when, where, what, why, how?"

*Who:* Are you the person who should talk, and is the other fellow the person who should listen? *When:* Is this the right time, or would another time be preferable? *Where:*

Is this the right place, or is there another place where better surroundings and greater privacy would help? *What*: Are you going to say the right thing? Will it have any unfortunate consequence that you can foresee? *Why*: Is there good reason for saying it? Is there good reason for not saying it? *How*: Can you say it properly to get exactly the right result?

Unless you have a positive answer to each of these questions you had better think twice before you talk. The habit itself of asking yourself these questions will make you sensitive to danger. It will eventually condition your impulses so that you can discard the questions and still be safe.

Your basic procedure is to sort out right from wrong in relation to any remark that you contemplate. The word "right," I should like to emphasize once again, is used in both its moral and its expedient sense. Some day the human race will learn that moral rightness does not contradict expedient rightness—a principle each person will quickly learn for himself if he starts living in accordance with it.

Doubtless you have observed that there are many people who frequently substitute talk for silence, no matter whether there is good reason or not. Their value, in discussing them, is that they show in exaggerated form the sort of errors that all of us occasionally make.

Many loose and uninhibited talkers are victims of a very natural human failing. They are self-centered. They are so wrapped up in themselves that they do not consider other points of view.

There is the person who will talk only of his own interests and expects every conversation to surround them. When another subject comes up, he will listen in pained silence until there is a breaking point, so that he can twist the conversation back to his own topic. Perhaps he will take the short cut of an interruption or perhaps he will be like the movie actress who said, "Let's don't talk about me all the

time. Let's talk about you. What did you think of my latest picture?"

There is the person who cannot resist cutting in on other people's remarks. I have heard conversations in which nobody was able to finish a single sentence. I have seen two people interrupt each other repeatedly over an extended period of time, neither paying the slightest attention to the remarks of the other.

There is the person who listens to your story, then says, "That's nothing!" and goes on with his. There is also the one who talks too loudly, announcing his personal business (and perhaps yours) to nearby strangers; or the person who seems to think with his tongue and says whatever pops into his mind; or the person who talks all the time, and slowly drives people who can't get away from him to distraction by chatter that is just too incessant to absorb. You don't tell these people about their faults. It wouldn't be diplomatic, and, besides, you can't quiet them long enough so that they will listen.

Personally, I get great enjoyment from a long silence. I like to create it, and I also like to relax in its peace. But I do not like to take part in the sort of conversation I have been discussing. There are a good many people who feel as I do. If there are none of them in your circle of close friends, perhaps somebody has been driving them away.

Kurt Fischer has a reputation for talking too much. When people see him coming, they duck out of sight—especially when they see that he has that light in his eye which indicates that he is about to launch, in detail, a garrulous onslaught.

"Do you know what I did this morning?" he will ask. If you move away, he will catch the lapel of your coat and talk more loudly. He will often interrupt himself to insist that you agree with one of his points. "Isn't that right?"

he will say. He uses conversation as a sounding board for his self-esteem.

The "I" specialist is usually the one who gets the reputation for "shooting off his mouth." Possibly he is responsible for the general impression that listening is a greater virtue than talking. People have to be mighty friendly before you can safely suggest that they join you in your self-praise.

Many discerning people believe that it is wise not to discuss one's self at all unless there is a compelling reason for it—and then only for as short a time as possible. Unless you are sure of exceptional friendliness in your listener—which would include a willingness to overlook faults—it is best that they should learn of your achievements by observing them or through conversation with others.

Of course, you cannot keep clear of all discussion of yourself. But when you must risk it, you can minimize the jeopardy of losing your listener's attention by decreasing your use of the perpendicular pronoun "I" and increasing your use of the oblique pronoun "you."

The constant use of profanity is as bad as the repetition of "I." There are people who believe that swearing gives proof of stamina and virility. But the person who resorts to unprintable expletives is criticized more than he is commended. Nobody is ever criticized for the omission of objectionable words and phrases.

Probably you have also met the person who cannot be asked even how he feels without his annoying you for twenty minutes with explanations. He should learn that the question "How are you?" isn't meant to be answered literally. Even though he feels miserable, you might prefer not to hear all the details. That question is merely a form of politeness, to be answered with "Fine!" After all, nobody grasps the importance of an illness that fails to show itself in some dramatic way, and then it is visible and doesn't need

to be described. Conversation about ill health should be saved for the doctor. He gets paid for listening.

Unless you are talking to an intimate friend or a relative who is genuinely interested in your health, abstain from giving an "organ recital"; it always calls for your listening, in return, to his. This is always a losing proposition for the person with the greater sensibility—which should always be you. If you are considerate of the other person's feelings, you will be compelled to admit that his health is worse than yours and that his tribulations would have completely done you in.

Knowing when not to talk becomes a matter of supreme importance in disclosures of confidential information. Never make such a disclosure unless a purpose is to be served. And never discuss your personal problems or ambitions except with those whom you can trust.

Your own reputation for trustworthiness is a valuable asset. Foster its development. Do not make any disclosure merely to satisfy your vanity. Resist the temptation to arouse curiosity by making a show of information that you can reveal only in part. Unless you follow your partial disclosure by supplying the whole story, you will irritate your listener. Should you find yourself spilling all the beans simply to prove that you know the whole story, you will regret it later.

Occasionally someone tries to goad you into making disclosures. Possibly he introduces some innocent-seeming subject with the calculated purpose of catching you off guard. In that case, refrain from gratifying your urge to open up. Get on safe ground by changing the subject. If the conversation again veers toward injudicious talk, go talk to somebody else.

You will find that an impulsive desire to give out confidential information will almost always disappear after a

moment or two of self-restraint. Yielding to the desire may bring momentary pleasure, but your prudent forbearance will give you a healthy self-respect and a reputation for stanchness and loyalty.

If you have felt any qualms on reading the foregoing, tighten up on your controls. Here is a helpful exercise: Get out your pencil and paper and jot down the names of the people to whom you have imparted confidential information indiscreetly. Study the list. Don't brood over it, but put it where it will come to your attention from time to time as an object lesson.

There is also the remark that is overheard because in the heat of excitement you talk too loudly or assume a degree of privacy that does not exist. That is why a good many plans go astray. There is the statement you make in the presence of some person you don't think will understand it—perhaps a child. That explains one of the reasons why children occasionally say such remarkable things. There is also the inadvertent disclosure that you make when some coincidence suggests that the other fellow already knows what he may not know. That is why it often pays to think twice before you jump to a conclusion that is not justified by the facts.

In the communication of our thoughts to others, we often offend by talking too much and too long. Knowing when to stop is a branch of the art of knowing when not to talk.

Some people take forever to say "good night" to their host, who is possibly stifling a yawn. Some people spin out a story until everybody has become inattentive. Some go right on convincing a person who has long since expressed full agreement. Such verbosity provokes impatience.

Keep alert to the signs that show the trend of your listener's feelings. Know when not to talk!

## Chapter 21

### *Mastering the Techniques of Humor*

OF ALL the ways to arouse interest and stimulate a two-sided conversation, few are so effective as expressing a healthy sense of humor. Laughter removes the strain from many an otherwise difficult situation. It breaks down barriers. It provides an atmosphere that facilitates handling both personal and business problems. It is conducive to good human relations.

Develop your sense of humor. Find ways to make people laugh. Join with them, and laugh yourself.

The first thing most people think of, on hearing that suggestion, is the advisability of having a supply of funny stories always on tap. That is easy to do. You hear and read enough funny stories to keep yourself fortified for every occasion. Yet when the appropriate moment arrives, how many can you remember?

If you are like most of us, there are times when you cannot remember any at all. When somebody puts you on the spot, you are in the position of the fellow who was introduced in these words: "Meet my funny friend, Jack. Go ahead, Jack, be funny!" Then, if ever, your mind goes blank.

The time to develop your ability to remember funny stories is not when you are called on for a story. It is when

you have a few moments available for self-improvement. Here is a suggested procedure:

Try to recall a funny story you heard recently. Think back to the occasion when you were entertained by it. That will give you the starting point for a mental search. Soon fragments of the story will creep into your mind, and with them as a clue you can reconstruct it. Then search out another clue and another story. Doing that sort of thing in occasional odd moments will periodically extend your repertoire.

The memory principles that we have already discussed will help you lodge the stories in your mind and recall them when you need them. Reduce each story to a single key word. Let it be a word that you can visualize and so typical of the story that remembering the key word will bring back the whole thing.

Use a different key word for each story that you want to remember. Then relate those key words to symbols that you link together in a mental chain, using one of the techniques given in Chapter 15. Thus you can make yourself a walking storehouse of readily available anecdotes. Try doing this just before you go to a party. You will be pleased with the result, and so will everybody else.

Exactly what makes people laugh?

Laughter is caused by a headlong rush of ideas through the mind. Those ideas must come in such rapid succession that their onslaught causes a sudden emotional shock. The shock throws the listener off his balance. It temporarily upsets his nervous equilibrium. He gets relief through the safety valve of laughter. But it is the abrupt whirl of superactive thought that turns the trick.

You can stimulate superactive thought by presenting a few words that suggest a great deal more than they tell. Thus they induce a disproportionately large amount of

action in your listener's mind. But to get the most out of a story, you will have to supply the elements of one or more concentrated shocks that will completely possess and bemuse his faculties. Those shocks must crowd his mind with swift, involuntary thinking. They must pack a tremendous mental response into an extremely short time. When you thus overload him with sudden thought, he will laugh. One staggering surge of emotional thinking will do the trick, but the more surges you pack into an instant, and the more violent you make them, the harder he will laugh.

You can readily discover how humor stimulates a succession of ideas that come swiftly enough to destroy the listener's emotional stability. Study the forces of emotional thought released in your own mind by almost any good story.

Here is a story on which you can test your reactions: An old-time drill sergeant called out his squad for fatigue duty, but only one man appeared. The sergeant was furious. "Two weeks in the guard house for you," he said unreasoningly. "Maybe that'll teach you not to show up alone!"

And here is another: Two sharp dealers agreed to trade horses—sight unseen and as is. One arrived at the scene carrying a wooden sawhorse. The other had the oldest broken-down swayback mare you ever saw in your life. The first man took one look at this ancient heap of horseflesh and said, "This is the first time I've ever been swindled in a deal."

"Would you like to trade back?" asked the other.

"No," came the reflective reply. "You skun me once and I ain't taking any more chances!"

The beginning of your story serves to create a setting. You start by providing the ingredients of later thought, on which your story hinges. You store up those ingredients in your listener's mind, ready for release at the proper instant. You must therefore include every essential point. You

must get it clearly understood. You must see that it will be remembered. Often you must refrain from telling more than is necessary, for fear it will confuse your listener's ability to make the necessary mental connections.

You can increase the kick of any story by packing it with utmost action. Occasionally a story will depend on little except the action itself. Here is one of that sort: A teacher asked her pupils to write a composition. "Make it short," she said, "and make your words suggest action." One child wrote: "A man went out leading five large dogs. Some boys threw stones at him. The man said, 'If you do that again I will turn my dogs loose and they will eat you up.' So they did and he did and they did."

It may at first seem strange to define humor as an onslaught of impulses that suddenly crowd the listener's mind. What is "funny" about that?

It is easy to understand this concept of humor if you consider it in relation to some of the situations that induce laughter although they are distinctly not funny in the accepted sense of the term. At least, they are not funny to the sober adult, although they may be to children, savages, or partial inebriates.

We call an ambulance for the person who cracks his skull after slipping on a banana peel. But we may not call the ambulance until we have first enjoyed our moment of emotional relief. We get our relief by laughing, and laughing indicates enjoyment. Why should we *enjoy* the misfortune? The answer is that we don't—although we may enjoy the laughter itself. Our immediate reaction to the accident stirs up a sudden onslaught of mental and emotional impulses. Those impulses crowd through our minds in the same confusing way as do the images and ideas that are stimulated by a funny story. That is the reason we laugh,

and it is precisely the same reason that causes us to laugh at what is really funny.

A child laughs at the fall of a pile of blocks, although it destroys the house he is building. He laughs because the falling blocks give him too many things to think about all at once. The adult, with his greater stability, can easily withstand that relatively minor shock.

The person who has had a couple of drinks will laugh more easily than the one who hasn't. He will laugh at what he would not ordinarily consider funny. He is more susceptible to the strain of a rapid succession of ideas because alcohol sharpens the edge of imagination, relieves inhibitions, and decreases emotional control. Give him just enough to drink, and he may laugh at a falling pile of blocks.

The concept that laughter results from an assault on the mind by a series of rapidly moving ideas will explain why a halfwit, a savage, or a child may laugh at what would not arouse laughter in an adult of normal intelligence and stability. The reason is that it takes less to upset the emotional equilibrium of a relatively unstable person. This concept will explain why slapstick humor makes people laugh—even most people who do not consider slapstick funny. The reason is that a person can be upset by attempting to follow rapid action that continually staggers his emotions, giving him one new impulse after another before he has had a chance to recover. This concept will explain why a very proper person who honestly abhors dirty stories may give way to laughter before recovering enough poise to register indignation. In truth he may not enjoy the story at all, although he may enjoy the laughter in spite of his discomfiture. But he laughs because he cannot prevent himself from laughing. His assaulted nervous system demands relief.

This concept does not at first seem to explain, however, why the victim of a practical joke so often fails to see the humor. But the reason is quite simple. You cannot appreciate a joke unless you "get" it. You cannot get it unless your mind is free from other preoccupation. The man who cracks his skull after slipping on a banana peel will not laugh. All his attention is preoccupied with his personal safety. Therefore his mind is not hospitable to the rush of impulses that engrosses others' attention and causes them to laugh.

Conceivably a series of laughter-inducing impulses might arise when you are in an automobile accident, when you are caught in the collapse of a building, when you get fired from your job, or when you are involved in any other predicament that stimulates swiftly moving thought. Bystanders may laugh, but you won't. The difference is not that the situation is "funny" to them but not to you. It is only that their minds are free to accept and act on the impulses while yours is otherwise engaged. Thus the situation that seemingly amuses one person may crush another.

A man brought into court for tossing a brick through a plate glass window explained himself by saying, "I wanted a comfortable home for the winter." "Is that so?" responded the judge. "I'll give you a comfortable home for eight winters!" Despite courtroom rules, the bystanders laughed. But even though it was good enough to get into the newspapers, the defendant failed to see the joke. The reason is just that his brain was tied up with considerations from which other people were free.

As the butt of a practical joke, your personal safety may be at stake. If so, your personal safety will engross you and prevent you from laughing. But it may be only your ego that is threatened. If your ego does not cause your faculties to freeze, you will be able to "laugh at yourself." But if it

does, you will be in no condition to receive and act on the impulses that induce laughter. You will be engrossed in the protection of your ego as the falling pedestrian is engrossed in his physical welfare.

Sudden raising or lowering of egos can bombard the mind with the sort of impulses that cause laughter, but it is a good idea—when you can do it—to raise both your listener's ego and your own. You can get that effect by the context of your story, or you can get it by telling a story so subtle that your listener knows you couldn't have told it unless your intelligence and sense of humor are exceptional. The fact that you have told it to him will obviously place him on the same level.

You can gain the effect of raising your listener's ego by lowering your own. You can do it by putting yourself in a position of embarrassment, for example, taking care to see that you will arouse pleasurable sympathy. You can do it by giving yourself the appearance of an artificially padded respectability that you suddenly cause to collapse. As your ego goes down, relatively speaking, your listener's goes up. You can do it by telling a story on yourself, and you can also do it by reacting well when somebody else tells a story on you—even though he violates the principles of diplomacy in the process. But no matter how you do it, raising the other fellow's ego will help your humor to succeed. It gets him on your side. It gets him relaxed. It gets him off guard. It makes him feel good. It makes him receptive to the impulses that induce laughter. It also helps him to enjoy the laughter itself.

Here is a story that raises the listener's ego by lowering that of the teller. I have told it dozens of times, but it always seems to create the impression that nobody has ever heard it before:

Once while making a speech I noticed a man in the fifth row. He nodded every few minutes, as though expressing agreement with my views. At once I felt friendly toward him. I told myself, "There's a man who has brains and knows how to use them. He agrees with everything I say." After the talk I was glad to see him approach for a personal word. I remembered the advice of an old politician who said that everybody enjoys talking about himself. So I shook hands with this fellow and asked him his name. He told me, and I went on by asking, "What's your business?"

"I'm a Baptist," he said with a smile.

Of course I was surprised. I wondered whether I had misjudged his intelligence. However, I decided to point out his mistake. Because I didn't want to seem superior, I smiled as I told him, "That's not your business; it's your belief." I expected to see his face light up with sudden understanding, but it didn't. So I went on. "I mean your business," I said. "Mine, for instance, is making speeches, so I'm a public speaker." Then I saw the light I had been looking for. With the same smile he replied, "That, my friend, is *your* belief!"

While your reaction to that story is still fresh, think back to the rush of superactive thought released at its climax. Remember that laughter springs out of swift involuntary thinking that throws you off your emotional balance and upsets your nervous equilibrium. Pick out the concentrated shock that momentarily tied your emotions into a knot. That is the thing we are going to discuss next.

The heart of the funny story, usually, is its "twist." The twist is a device for supercharging the speed of the mental and emotional bombshell that is released at the end of the story. It is a device for putting "English" on that bombshell at the precise instant of its release, much as a billiard player will spin his cue ball on its vertical axis. It is a device for

releasing unexpected forces that will behave in an unexpected way. Therefore it is a device that you can use to give unexpected acceleration and unexpected behavior to the mental and emotional forces released by your story. The more expert your twist, the more laughter you will induce. If you want to make your stories ring the bell, give them the perfect twist.

There is a gag about the dry old professor who went to sleep and dreamed that he was lecturing; then he awoke to find that he really was. Dozens of people have explained their reactions to that story by saying, "First you see the professor in bed; then he suddenly whirls into position before his class. It is the unexpected switch in your basis of reasoning that stirs your emotions."

Look for the twist in each of the following sentences and take it apart for yourself:

Parents used to talk to their children the way the kids now talk to their parents.

Probably few things would drive a man to monogamy more surely than a genuine taste of outright polygamy.

There's no living authority on how hard a mule can kick.

A lecture is the process by which the notes of the professor become the notes of the student without passing through the brain of either.

I like a man who can exaggerate, but he suits me a little too well.

Masculine logic makes sense, whereas feminine logic costs dollars.

A smart girl like her wouldn't have to study anything so simple as psychology.

And finally, there was the fellow who started his participation in an evening of penny ante by saying, "My psychiatrist says I should win."

To understand the workings of the twist, consider the normal process of unstimulated thought. Your mind tends to have only one conscious idea at a time, but it entertains many by passing them one after another in review. Usually there is no particular rush.

What is in your mind is related to what was there a second ago, and it is also related to what will be there a second later. Or it was prompted by some outside stimulus, as by this book. While a fairly steady stream of ideas represents ordinary mental activity, the twist of a funny story releases ideas a great deal faster than you are accustomed to receiving them. The flow of your ideas is suddenly thrown into headlong flight. Your conscious mind is tempted to admit a number of ideas simultaneously instead of in orderly procession.

The reason a funny story needs a twist is that seldom can you otherwise cut loose such a rapid crowding of thoughts that you shock your listener into losing his emotional balance. You cannot talk fast enough to do it directly, for the listener's mind is quicker than the speaker's tongue. So you create a setting. You charge that setting with potential mental action. When your setting is complete, you release the humorous possibilities that you have stored up in your beginning words. You do it in one quick unexpected thrust that cuts loose an avalanche of thought. You do it by giving him the clue that causes him to unwind the twist, and it is when unwinding the twist that he engages in super-active thought.

You can give your story a twist by creating a picture somehow absurdly incongruous or out of proportion, which the listener is called on mentally to unscramble. You can do it by presenting an apparently logical set of mental images and concepts which, on completion, suddenly appear ridiculous to him and need to be straightened out. You can

do it by exaggeration or understatement, which he must adjust to reality. You can do it by compelling him suddenly to inject logic into an irrational situation or straighten out an unexpected contradiction in your story, exposing its flaws to the light of recognition. You can do it by making his mind rapidly refer to one or more earlier thoughts and adjust them in relation to present thoughts. You can do it by setting his mind on one track, then causing it to leap to another track, or by any other device that causes him to change his mental direction or switch his thinking at high speed. You can do it by creating almost any situation that makes it necessary for him to readjust his faculties fast enough to destroy his composure, so long as he is able consciously to keep up with what is going on, and so long as his thoughts are not engrossed in personal considerations that make him inhospitable to the mental gyrations that would otherwise engulf him. But you will help yourself along if you take him by surprise and catch him off balance, and especially if you deliver your thrust when he feels good and when his guard is down. Then it will be easy to throw distortion and confusion into his thoughts and compel the reaction you want.

A passing motorist stopped to engage the attention of a man in the act of climbing the rail of a high bridge. "Stop!" shouted the motorist. "You'll be killed!"

The would-be suicide turned and asked, "What is there to live for?"

"Come sit with me for a few minutes," retorted the motorist, "and I think I can tell you."

There ensued a long and serious conversation. Presently both men got out of the car. They solemnly shook hands and jumped together.

That story has been told because I have asked a good many people to explain quite carefully just what went

through their minds to set off their laughter. All of them, after enough prodding, have told me approximately this: "Suddenly you realize that the motorist not only failed to convince the stranger, but was persuaded to abandon his own view and adopt that of the would-be suicide. You get a staggering picture of opposing forces being reconciled, then going in the wrong direction. But the mental action all takes place in a split second. In the process, you suddenly have to reverse all your thinking and it is too much for you."

Perhaps you have noticed that explaining this and other stories in the foregoing pages has provided an anticlimax. That is likely to happen, and there is a lesson in it. Explanation, even though it covers every detail of the listener's typical reaction (which none of these explanations do) necessarily reduces the reaction to slow motion. Slow motion fails to excite. That is why the person who fails to "get" a joke cannot be helped by detailing what he missed. It is a good deal better to retell the story and give him a better hint, but it is best to do the job right in the first place. That is also why you laugh less heartily at a retelling of the same story—at least, you do if you recall all the details so clearly that your knowledge of what is coming spoils the spontaneity of your reaction. You have already untwisted it.

Starting a story is a little bit like putting the figures into a calculating machine. Presently you press a button, and action begins while you listen and watch. It is a little bit like giving your listener the figures to add in his mind, except that he doesn't know the meaning of the figures, doesn't know he is going to add them, and isn't particularly interested in doing so. Yet when you finally stimulate him to mental action he puts everything together quite involuntarily because he cannot prevent himself from doing it. He does it so fast that he upsets himself in the process.

As your story develops, you add one element at a time until you have stored up all that is needed. In the process, you provide a gap for the imagination of your listener to jump. You must get that gap just right. If it is too wide, your listener's mind will not be able to make the necessary leap. If it is too narrow, the leap will not excite. The trick is to achieve the widest gap that can be bridged in one flash, so that your listener's mind will be compelled to do the maximum of swift involuntary thinking. Then you touch him off by providing a hint that will cause his mind to make the jump.

The twist is what contains the lightning flash of potential thought. The gap is the point where the concepts to be reconciled most closely approach each other. The hint is what releases the flash of involuntary thought.

In one swift word, you provide a hint to the incongruity, the distortion, the mental switches and adjustments that your listener will be compelled to make. Thus you release his mental and emotional forces. Those forces take over and do the remainder of the work. They continue until he has made all the necessary adjustments so that his mind has again achieved stability.

It is like laying out all the pieces of an implausible mental jigsaw puzzle, but saving the key piece until last. When that key piece is exposed, the listener's imagination takes over. All the other pieces suddenly start flying into place in his mind. His emotions are rendered unstable, and—pop goes the safety valve. He is toppled from his usual equanimity into paroxysms of mirth.

The foregoing shows the wisdom of putting your hint into the last line—into the last word, if you can. Often you can increase the violence of your listener's reaction if you pause perceptibly between the final setting of your trap and the exposure of your hint. With a really good story,

the pause may wisely last five seconds or more, with resulting improvement in the effect. Occasionally, if your story is subtle, there will be just as much pause after you expose the hint—for a subtle story is one that demands extra mental action on the part of your listener. It gives him what the motion picture director would call a "double-take." In reality, what he does is to figure out the hint for himself—a process by which he sets the gap instead of relying on you to do it.

Don't pause unless the effect will be helped. When you do pause, use the pause to create suspense. Freight the pause with curiosity. See that it will train your listener's mind expectantly in the direction of what is to come. During that pause, bring his thoughts to a temporary halt. Then his rush of sudden thought will seem more violent by contrast with the period of inactivity that preceded it, just as a noise will seem louder by contrast with a preceding period of quiet.

An easy way to introduce your pause is to say, "You can't imagine what happened next—." You can also create a period of alert expectancy by letting the listener ask a question that will cause him to set the trap himself. Try this one if you want to break up a sewing circle: "Do you know why the ladies take their sewing to the weekly club meeting?" "No, why?" "It's to give them something to think about while they talk!"

From the foregoing discussion, there is evidently a correlation between a sense of humor and imagination. The enjoyment of a funny story will often depend on the listener's imagination. In one sense, imagination may be defined as the mental lightning that enables the mind to jump a gap. Therefore, in that sense, virulence of imagination determines how wide a gap can be jumped. If the listener's imagination is not agile enough to perform the mental coun-

terpart of a physical handspring, even though it may travel the complete path of thought involved in unscrambling the elements of a funny story, the result will be a washout because it will fail to excite. His brain must have the ability to react spontaneously or it's no go. Maybe that is one of the reasons why a human being is almost the only animal that can laugh.

There is a good deal more that imagination can do to support a sense of humor, for imagination figures in other ways than its ability to bridge a mental gap. It is also the mind's ability to form imaginative pictures, and the ability to grasp a funny story often depends on such imagery. If you will think back over the sample stories given in this chapter, you will recall several of that sort.

There are also other kinds of imagination. You can imagine a sound, a touch, a taste, a smell—perhaps as easily as you can imagine a picture. You can also imagine a motion, and even a sensation of ideas passing through your conscious mind. A funny story may depend on any or all of these forms of imagination—and if you lack imagination of the required sort you will be unable to appreciate the story. Realizing this, it is easy to see that you will be wise, in telling a story, to stimulate the desired sort of imagination to its utmost. But a sense of humor depends on more than imagination.

A sense of humor also depends on the ability to be alert, to perceive meanings instantly, to listen closely to the first part of a story and remember its details when the story reaches its climax. It depends on the ability to recognize incongruities, distortions, and lack of proportion. It depends on the ability to expose and unravel a complication and make the swift mental adjustments that are indicated. It depends on the intelligence and mental agility to unscramble a complicated mixture of rational and irrational

ideas at breath taking speed. The listener must be capable of rapid mental action or he cannot receive ideas fast enough to disturb his emotional equilibrium.

A quick thinker with an imaginative mind will usually react while a slower and less imaginative person is still pondering—and it is worth noting that when a funny story is told to a group of people, the first laugh is likely to be loudest and longest. A funny story may therefore be regarded as something of a test of intelligence and imagination. A wisely selected series of stories conceivably could be used in checking a listener's memory, in determining the speed of his reactions, and in judging how wide a gap his mind can jump. But for the purpose of getting a good reaction, it is more to the point to see that your story will go across. Therefore you will want to adjust it to the intelligence and imagination of your listener.

A characteristic of humor is that there must be something irrational about it, or at least about the reaction in the listener's mind. By upsetting your emotional stability, a funny story makes you at least mildly irrational. After all, laughter is only an expression of emotion, and it springs from emotional impulses. The irrational aspect of humor is shown by the story of the woman who made her erring and neglectful husband work after his death by having him cremated and putting his ashes in an hour glass. The listener's instant reaction seems to be one of sympathy—as though her act would in any way discomfort her departed spouse. There was also a highly irrational piece of humor embodied in a famous old story that Mark Twain used to tell. As nearly as I can remember it, here is a version that should be suitably illustrative.

After the smoke of battle cleared, a soldier lay injured in the field. "Will you give me a lift?" he called to a man who passed nearby. "My leg's been shot off." A moment

later the injured man was stretched over the passerby's shoulder, head dangling behind. Presently along came a stray cannon ball and removed the injured man's head. Unaware, the rescuer trudged on.

"Hi, there," called a friend. "What are you doing with the corpse?"

"He's no corpse," answered the rescuer.

"The heck he isn't. His head's been shot off!"

The rescuer eased his burden to the ground. He contemplated it for a long moment. Reflectively he said, "That's funny. He told me it was his leg."

Occasionally the kick of a story is so well embodied in the story itself that it is hard to see how the story could be told so badly that it misses fire. You don't have to understand the emotional response to humor to enjoy it, and you don't necessarily have to understand it to get a good story across. Whether you understand it or not, you'll laugh if the kick registers in your consciousness. If you refuse to laugh there are times when you will almost explode. You can no more prevent a spontaneous laugh than you can stifle a compelling sneeze, and in that sense telling a funny story may roughly be compared with the process of administering snuff to somebody else. Do the job right and he can't resist.

Sometimes a person will tell a story well without understanding the story himself. Sometimes he will get his humor across unintentionally. Sometimes he will inject humor into almost every remark he makes, without even knowing how he does it. As in the case of the famous Dr. Spooner, the preacher who was reputedly unable to keep his consonants straight, he may be very much chagrined by the results. But most of us do it because we want to. We only wish we could do it better.

Once I spoke at a banquet where my talk preceded another made by Con McCole, the humorist. We sat together at dinner, and I wasn't going to lose that chance to learn something of the humorist's technique. "I suppose you save your best stories for the last part of your talk," I told him, "to get the best climax."

His answer surprised me.

"No," he said. "I put the best stories first. When the climax comes, they'll laugh at anything." Evidently he saw that I thought he was pulling my leg. "I'll tell you what I'll do," he went on. "When I reach the climax tonight, I'll tell a five-minute story with no point. You'll see that the audience will laugh harder at that story than at anything I have already said. When I finish telling that pointless story, I'll tell it all over again—word for word. They will laugh harder the second time than they did the first time. The reason is that when you get an audience into the right emotional condition, they'll laugh at almost anything. Humor is intoxicating. It can be just as intoxicating as liquor."

Con McCole put humor into his talk. He made his audience laugh. Then he put pathos into his talk. He made his audience cry. He got his audience off balance first one way and then the other. He pushed them back and forth. After a few minutes of that sort of treatment, he had them in the palm of his hand. That is one of the reasons he could send them into paroxysms and spasms over stories that most of us could not tell without raising a yawn. And in case you are wondering, he fulfilled his promise to me.

Haven't you noticed how laughter may induce a flow of tears? Laughter and tears merge in hysterics. Both are emotional safety valves. They help to restore equilibrium when

it is needed. They are not so different as many people suppose.

The foregoing stories and explanations have been presented to describe the mechanics of humor. Quite naturally, I wanted to build the discussion around the sort of stories that people usually tell, but there has been less resort to the risqué than characterizes the typical humor of our day. There is a reason for that.

Personally, I do not favor the so-called "dirty" story. I do not want to be remembered, after a social gathering, as the person who told "that awful joke." I don't think you do either. But there is a deeper reason for my view. I think the foregoing pages show what that reason is, but I hope to make it unmistakable.

We laugh not necessarily because a story is "funny," but because it assaults our consciousness with what amounts to an emotional shock. Often is it easy to provide that shock by using shocking material. Even under inexpert treatment, the "dirty" story tends automatically to intensify the listener's reaction. That sort of shock is like a crutch to support humor in the person who otherwise lacks the delicate touch.

Often a "dirty" story will get its point across without objectionable words. People may believe that such a story is "clean." I do not share that view. It may be that the evil is in the mind of the listener (as so many people are fond of saying) but it is also true that that is exactly where the teller intended to put it. Even though each word, by itself, may be socially acceptable, there is no escaping the fact that the listener's reaction is a calculated part of the story. In the light of this concept, it is easy to see that a "dirty" story is often a good deal dirtier than most people realize—until they think the matter through. A good many popular stories would hardly stand the sort of analysis given in this chapter.

During recent years it has been my observation that the stage, as almost standard practice, is a good deal less inhibited than any social groups where I have been present. So, often, are books. But magazines and motion pictures intended for mass distribution are more closely restricted.

Motion picture producers are slowly developing a technique that progressively thwarts the limiting effect of censors. It is not for me to say that the technique is good or bad. I hope I have said enough in this book to convince the majority of readers that I am no blue-nosed prude, but I propose to describe this slowly developing technique.

A good many years ago, motion picture censors clamped down on the obvious *double entendre*, the device for getting humor across by a remark with two meanings—one of which is clean. The listener could take his choice. Today, what is shown on the screen is usually fit for a Sunday School, provided its members have little imagination. But it is often calculated to stimulate imaginative responses that, if put on the screen as they appear in the listeners' minds, could be condoned by very few proponents of the most advanced personal liberty. The dialogue and action, it may be argued, are public, while the listener's imagination is private. But there is nothing private about the resulting jubilation—some of which, as every adult moviegoer knows, is downright bawdy.

It is not my intention to condone or condemn, but only to apply the searchlight of analysis. I have often observed an interesting phenomenon that is evidently based on people's failure to realize that the reactions to a story are in reality a part of the story itself.

Five persons hearing the same story will get five different sets of impulses and images, and five different reactions. They will laugh with five different degrees of appreciation. In reality, however, they will all be actuated by much the

same basic stimuli. But they will perhaps interpret those stimuli in five different ways.

Maybe you once told a story that sent four people into spasms of enjoyment while a fifth acidly remarked, "I don't consider that proper for *this* gathering!" The fifth person may have been no more prudish than the others. Maybe he just got a more shocking set of images—perhaps of a sort not suspected by you. It pays to know the strength of the story you tell. But there is also another possibility. If the fifth is a person who literally considers that the reaction is a part of the story, anything can happen to him.

I have read a good many stories that could not be used in this chapter. Although many of those stories have come out in very proper magazines, and even in religious publications, they could not stand the sort of analysis to which they would necessarily have been exposed. This leads to another situation that may arise when you tell something close to the line of distinction between good and bad taste.

Maybe there is somebody present who has a talent for seeing the worst. He makes no cold retort. He goes to the other extreme. "Ah," he may think, "the bars are down. Now I'll tell the one I heard in the locker room last night!" I've seen that sort of thing happen more than once—sometimes with unsettling results.

In case the fine line of judgment ever escapes you, remember this: If it would be safe to "explain" a story, it would also be safe to tell it.

Consider the foregoing discussion in relation to every story that you hear in the next few weeks. Notice and analyze your own reactions. Seek the understanding that will assist you in selecting the stories you will pass along. When you know what you are looking for, it will be easy to find.

Use care and discrimination in making your selections. Choose stories that fit your personality. See that they express

your own brand of humor. Seek stories that are subtle, hard to remember, or complicated to present. That will help you to outshine your competitors. But don't tell too many. You improve your reputation by telling the best ones, not the most.

As you tell each story, check up on your technique. Make it workmanlike. Start by capturing attention. Arouse powerful curiosity. Lodge each essential point clearly in your listener's mind. Create a carefully developed setting. Lay a good foundation, set your gap well, then provide the hint that will touch things off. Create a climax that will stimulate a violent reaction.

Let your voice cut through and command attention. String your words together in such a way as to hold interest. Strive for maximum smoothness. Remember that you will often make the best impression by maintaining a deadpan expression—or at least a reasonably straight face—until you have got your point across. Keep your excitement under control. Practice these elements of the technique of humor until you have mastered them.

For a reverse effect, here are easy ways to spoil a story: Tell how funny it is. Engulf your words in laughter. Get too excited. Talk too fast. Run your words together. Speak indistinctly. Confuse your listener. Omit a vital point. Put in too much. Fail to set a proper gap. Fail to stimulate a climax by neglecting to provide the proper hint.

I know a man who tells a story well enough, but then feels called on to show you how it works. He tries to sell it to you. He is as bad as the one who listens to your story just so long and then, recognizing it, adds the final touch himself.

Remember that a sense of humor is indicated as much by your reaction to somebody else's story as by your success in telling your own. Give the other person's offering the

attention it deserves. Get every detail. Store each element in your mind. Do this by listening as though you expect to tell the same story later yourself—which, provided you get it clearly, you are likely to do. But don't look ahead to see what is coming. If you succeed, you will only destroy the spontaneity of your response. Instead, make yourself hospitable to the full impact. When you get it, your laughter will convey satisfying applause.

You need not feel that you must offer an unending succession of funny stories in order to apply your understanding of humor. There are other ways of expressing the subtle touch.

Do not take life too seriously. Exercise your sense of proportion. Intersperse your conversation and speeches with light-hearted comments. Repeatedly stimulate the super-abundant mental and emotional responses that will pleasurabley upset your listener's balance. With practice, you can acquire great skill. Phrases like the following will get good results:

He was in violent agreement.

He has a philandering eye.

People admire him in proportion to what they know about him.

He took it on both chins.

He answered my question, but I question his answer.

You may be responsible for an occasional illegitimate brainchild, but you cannot gain real competence without practice. Attempting to do so will classify you with the boy who said, "I won't try to swim until I'm sure I know how!" Just practice your quips among people who like you so well that your mistakes won't count against you. In time you will extend your mastery of the knack.

But a few words of caution.

If you want to be taken seriously by your friends and associates, don't joke too much of the time. Use humor as a contrast to what will bring you recognition and credit, instead of as a substitute for it. Create no impression to your detriment, or to the detriment of anyone else.

Though good humor is always appreciated, it is seldom wise to poke fun at anyone in public. So many temptations to do this arise that the person who is trying to develop his own humor by practice will be in constant danger of causing bad feeling. Reject the temptation to make somebody the butt of a joke. Don't wound anyone's pride. Remember that sarcasm can turn into a boomerang.

If you can't raise a laugh without hurting people's feelings, don't credit yourself with a gift for humor. Any applause that you get from the sidelines by your negative humor can make you callous to injuries you cause to others. Ill-natured railery results in misunderstandings, trouble, and hostilities, though you will not always find it out.

Occasionally think over the kind of humor in which you ordinarily indulge. Ask yourself how many of your witty sallies could have been wished unsaid by your listeners. Be vigilant every time you try to raise a laugh. Anticipate and side-step every chance of resentment. Maybe you think this will deprive you of a lot of fun, and maybe you are right, but it will help you to keep your friends.

Don't be the person who always has snappy comebacks or wisecracks. The clever retort and the perfect squelch may get you a reputation for smartness, but they will also make enemies.

The person with a real gift for unbarbed humor can attract popularity anywhere. But the person who opens up just to amplify, modify, or criticize other people's offerings, or to fling off taunting jests, is bound to be destructive to the egos and emotions of many listeners.

Don't look for chances to punctuate other people's remarks with cynical interjections. Don't derogate what they say. Your quips may demonstrate your cleverness, but most people will recognize that you are only brash. These are the bad tendencies in humor. Do not resort to them.

You may have all the necessary qualifications of a humorist, but you are an undeveloped humorist if you lack the right emotional outlook and habits. A good-natured disposition, a healthy imagination and liveliness, combined with a desire for self-improvement, will make a passable humorist of anybody. Packing your ideas tight into few words, talking in terms that induce mental handsprings in your listeners' minds, and putting plenty of action into your words, combined with a cheerful outlook on life, these things are enough to produce a humorist. Add to them a method based on the principles of humor as presented in these pages, and you will be well on your way toward success.

Get humor into your everyday conversation. Leaven your talk with a touch of frivolity. Occasionally interject some unbarbed commentary on the foibles of human nature. And above all, learn to laugh at yourself. If you do these things, you will be welcome everywhere.

An easy way to develop latent humor is to train yourself to notice and comment on ludicrously incongruous situations whenever they arise.

Call attention to something out of place or out of proportion. Exaggerate the effect if you can: A man too big for his chair, a small fellow with a booming bass voice, a light turned on in the glow of noonday sun, a carefully locked window with no glass. Create a situation: Pretend to read a newspaper upside down, to drink from an empty glass, to light your cigar with a burnt-out match, or to play a fiddle with no strings or bow. I have seen all these things arouse laughter, and uproarious laughter at that.

Twist the wording of an otherwise commonplace remark: "That hits the nail right on the thumb." Transpose the consonants of two words used in close relation: "The skinny old stingeflint." Give a humorous turn to something said by another person: "He'd *have* to be crazy to be crazy about that!" Make an unexpected comparison: "That's the difference between education and intelligence." Coin an expressive word: "He's bulldogmatic; what we need around here is a good antiskeptic." Try an exaggeration: "He has a wide open mind." Or an understatement: "I'm not overwhelmed; in fact not even whelmed." Provide a daffy definition: "An expediter is a supersalesman working in reverse; a lady is a person who never for one instant forgets that she is a lady; a monkey wench is a female gorilla." Create a surprising description: "His conscience is showing; he has a protruding personality; his respectability curdles your blood." And here are a few more twists for good measure: "Who's that girl looking as though she'd read a book?" "He was busy shifting his mental gears." "In all my life I have never felt like myself." "If you were money, I'll bet you'd be at least sixty-five cents!"

Of all humor, possibly the most frequently used is the pun. And if we are to believe a very common remark, it is the most despised. Anybody with courage to announce that he likes puns (especially with coffee) had better be ready to run. Nevertheless, the pun is popular. Because it is easy to analyze and understand, it offers one of the easiest entering wedges to use in developing a real flair for originality.

The pun is a play on words having one sound but more than one meaning, so used that one meaning is natural and logical while the other is not. The different meanings, cut loose at the same instant, throw the listener into confusion. They can give him so devastating an emotional shock that he will be unable to put his scorn of the pun into words

until after he has betrayed his appreciation of it by a burst of resounding laughter.

Careful observation will probably convince you that regardless of what so many people proclaim, a good proportion of all repartee is based on the pun. I have noticed that even the person who professes to dislike that "lowest form of wit" will often laugh with enjoyment that is oblivious to his own inconsistency. A pun-hating friend recently overheard the remark, "There is only one phrase a married man needs to know: 'Yes, dear!' If he has that, he has the works." To which my friend instantly responded, "You mean if he hasn't, he'll get the works!" When my friend reads that story in this book he will know the level to which he inadvertently stooped.

The pun has peculiar advantages for development of a sense of humor. You can easily pick up lead ideas for it, because they constantly arise during conversation. Keep alert for words with double meanings. See how their meanings can be turned to advantage. If you look for them, opportunities for surprising originality can readily be discovered. As a matter of fact, the average person's danger is that he will become too adept at it. He will do it too often. He will use too little discretion. He will become too wild in his demands on people's imaginations. As in many other matters, enough is enough. But the pun is good ground for experiment, and if used discreetly it will lead to better things. Many a seasoned humorist who now looks down on the lowly pun started at that level—and worked up!

In closing, there is one more story that I should like to tell. It will show that there are times when a pun is not so bad. It will also show that some of the best humor occurs in life itself.

At a Christmas party in an industrial plant, one of my friends told me of the pleasures of having a little girl at

home. "My daughter is five years old," he said. "When I enter the house at night she comes running to the door. She sits on my foot and wraps her arms around my leg. Wherever I go for the next few minutes, she rides along. When she gets tired of that, she gets off and says, 'Squeeze me, Daddy. Squeeze me till I pop!' So I bend down and squeeze her. When she can't stand any more she says 'Pop!'"

